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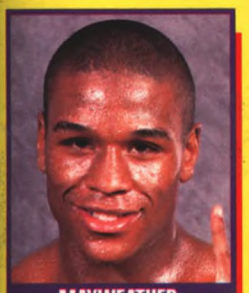
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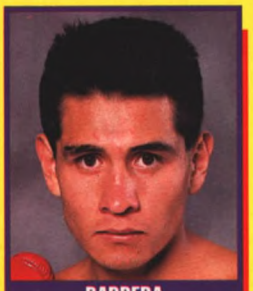
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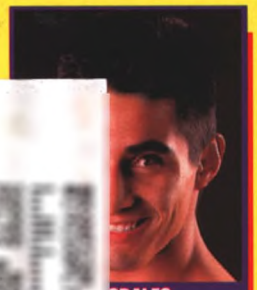
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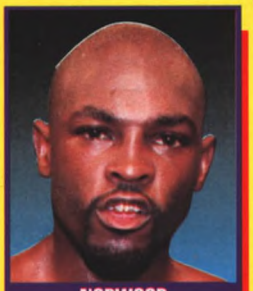
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- JAMES PRINCE: BOXING'S NEW POWERBROKER
- ANTHONY FLETCHER: DOES HE DESERVE TO DIE?

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RINGSIDE

The specter of death is never far removed from the world of boxing. The Sweet Science is, after all, a perilous venture, a sport that sometimes exacts the ultimate price from its participants. And, sadly, it's not unusual for the topic to be examined on the pages of THE RING. The most recent of such unhappy occasions was the death of Stephan Johnson last December. But the Grim Reaper creeps onto the pages of this issue from an entirely different direction—from death row, where the final exit comes not from blows received in one-on-one combat, but from a needle in the arm, while strapped helplessly to a hospital gurney.

As far as I know, "Does Anthony Fletcher Deserve To Die?" *(page 28)* is the first in-depth article to appear in the 78-year history of THE RING about an ex-fighter awaiting execution. Robert Cassidy's spellbinding story of Fletcher's battle to stay alive is both provocative and disturbing, and raises many perplexing questions concerning the former lightweight's conviction and sentence.

Unlike Hurricane Carter, Fletcher has not become a *cause celebre*. No group is working to secure his release, Bob Dylan hasn't written a song about him, and no book or movie of his life story is in the works. Fletcher is just one of thousands of indigent men on death row—some innocent, some guilty—who can't afford to hire Johnnie Cochran to save their ass.

I do not know if Fletcher is guilty of the crime he's been convicted of, and the article isn't an attempt to exonerate him. Even so, Cassidy got to know Fletcher fairly well over the many months and many conversations it took to put all the pieces together, and couldn't help getting a sense of the sort of man Fletcher is.

"There are two things that strike me about Anthony," reported Cassidy. "And that's his determination and sense of humor. This is a guy who is on his own, behind bars, and every day he does something to help his appeal, whether it's writing a letter or studying in the law library. But through it all, he still manages to smile. In every letter or conversation, he'll tell you a joke and make you laugh."

The one thing Fletcher requested during his numerous conversations with Cassidy was that THE RING print the address of his defense fund. After some consideration, I do so here, not as an advocate, but in respect for the courage and sportsmanship Fletcher always displayed in the ring. The following is a portion of a letter he mailed to our editorial office in early-April:

"Families Incorporated for Survival has come together to build a legal defense fund for Anthony Fletcher. Please send contributions to: Dianne Setters, 1313 South 49th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19143."

***

Boxing, like nature, is ruthless in its treatment of the weak and infirmed. This was seldom better demonstrated than in Thomas Hearns' ill-advised "farewell fight" with Uriah Grant, when the 41-year-old "Hit Man" was forced to quit at the end of the second round, hobbled by a sprained ankle.

A great fighter like Hearns deserved a better swan song, but he only has himself to blame. Reportedly financially secure, Hearns couldn't resist one last turn in the spotlight, and paid an embarrassing price. I hope the next time I see Hearns in the ring, he's just up there to take a bow. A plaque in Canastota awaits you, Tommy. Please, no more humiliating pratfalls along the way.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 79, No. 8 August 2000

The RING

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(215) 643-6385
SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
London Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9
Marion, OH 43306-8121
(740) 375-2335

THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 79, No. 8, is published monthly, with an additional issue in December, by London Publishing Co., 7002 W. Butler Pike, Ambler, PA 19002. Periodicals postage paid at Ambler, PA 19002 and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 2029, Dept. 9, Marion, OH 43306-8121. Single copy price $2.95 ($4.50 in Canada, £2.25 in U.K.). Subscription price $32.45 in the U.S., $42.85 Canada and remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage.

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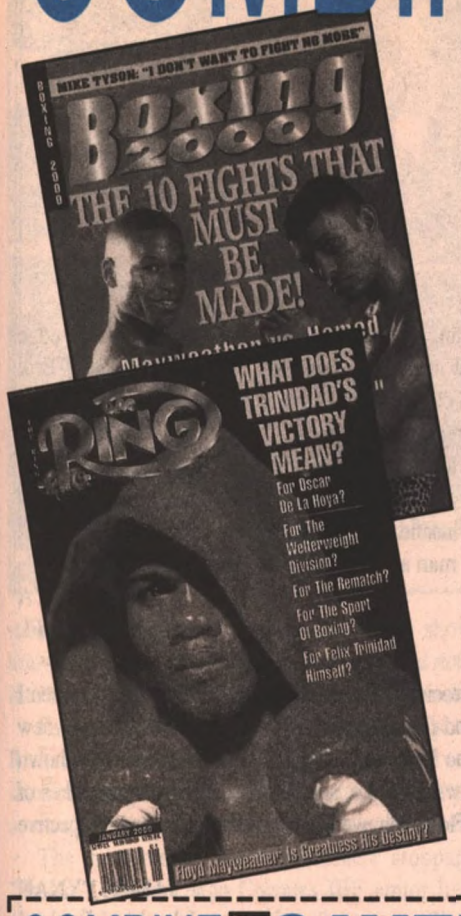

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COME OUT WRITING

We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

JUDGE DREAD

I am happy to say that I have just watched something on the tube that takes man to the very edge of heart, mind, and soul. It is refreshing to know that in this day there are fighters the likes of Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera. But what was a classic fight between two great Mexican fighters will, unfortunately, also go down in history as a great controversy.

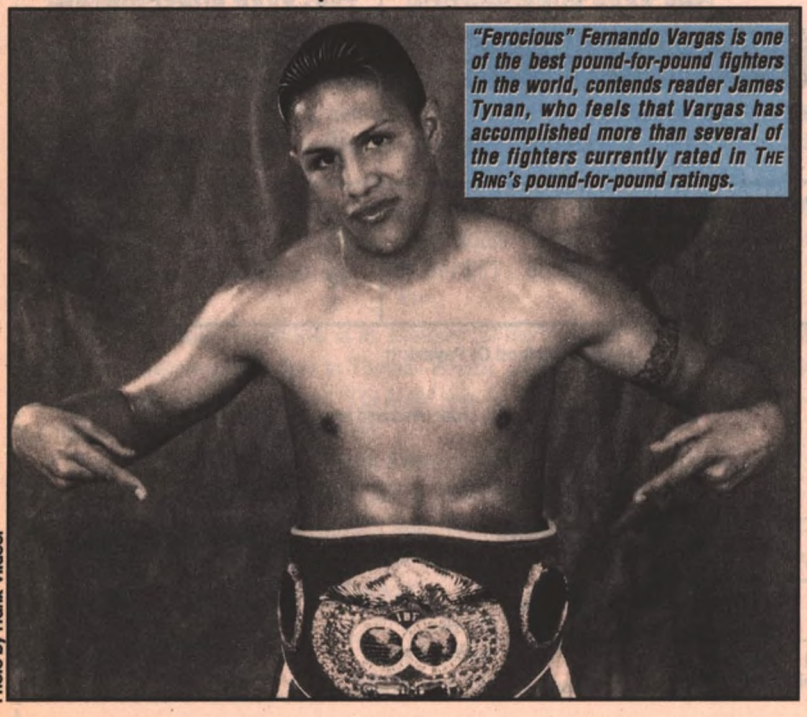
Why does Dalby Shirley's scorecard that favored Morales 115-112 bother me so much? Is it just me? Or is it the incompetence of a judge? I quickly found out after talking with several fight fans that it was an incompetent decision and that I wasn't insane. It amazes me how so many knowledgeable boxing enthusiasts can see it one way, while one man alone saw it completely different.

ED MOYA
West Palm Beach, FL

A FEROCIOUS FAN

Is it me, or is everybody ignoring the talents of "Ferocious" Fernando Vargas? Every month, when I pick up my copy of THE RING, I go straight to the pound-for-pound list to see if there has been any new additions to the ratings, and to my shock and horror, no Fernando Vargas. I believe Vargas has shown more talent in his fights against Yory Boy Campas, Howard Clarke, and Raul Marquez, than the likes of Mark Johnson, Ricardo Lopez, Bernard Hopkins, and Floyd Mayweather have shown in their respective careers.

JAMES TYNAN
Ickenham, England



"Ferocious" Fernando Vargas is one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world, contends reader James Tynan, who feels that Vargas has accomplished more than several of the fighters currently rated in THE RING's pound-for-pound ratings.

Photo by Frank Vitucci

MARTIN'S LOST IT

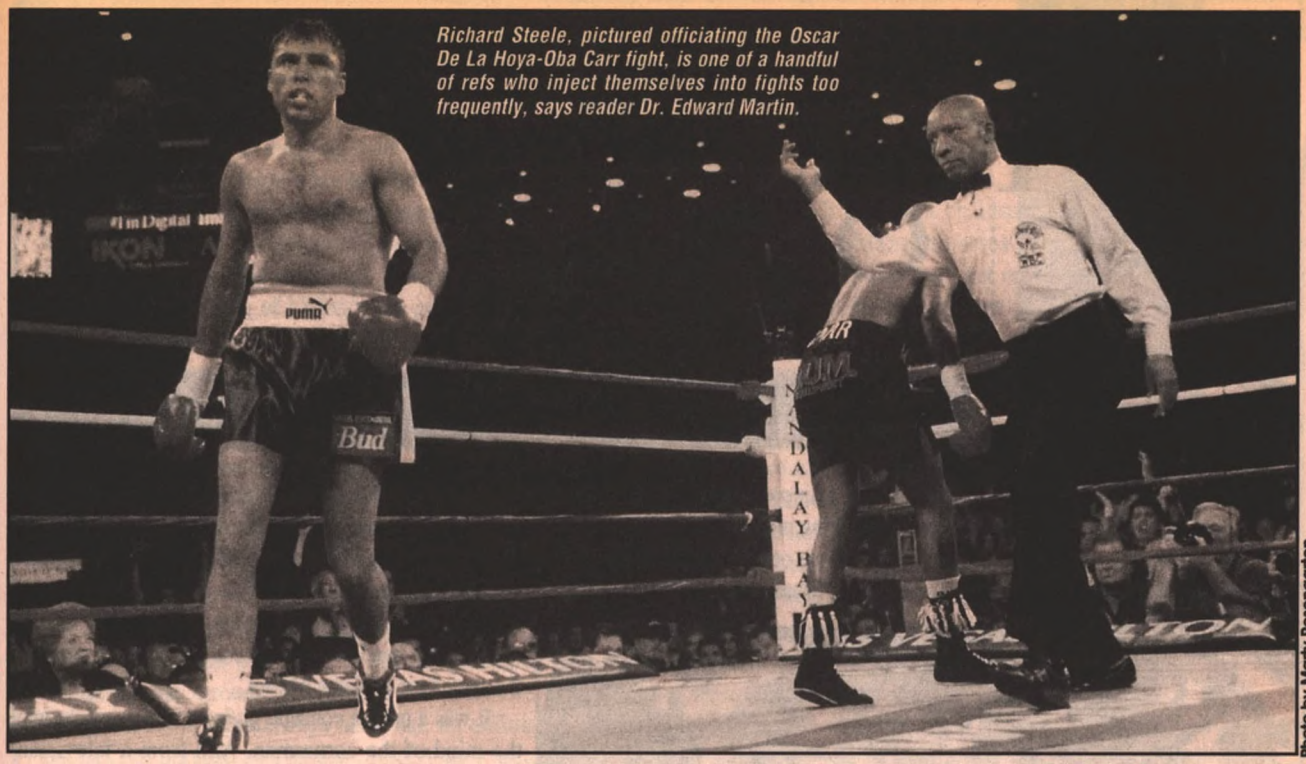
The recent decision in Las Vegas that gave Christy Martin a win over Belinda Laracuente was a disgrace to boxing! Why is it that every time we have a Don King production, the house fighter always wins? Here was a case in which virtually everyone who saw the fight agreed that Laracuente won at least six of the eight rounds, and possibly as many as seven. Yet Martin, who looked terrible, gets the win. At age 31, Martin looked like age and the number of bouts she has had finally caught up with her.

Laracuente showed more boxing skill than any woman boxer I have seen in years. She should at least get a rematch.

WALTER MAGNOLIA
Holbrook, NY

LET'S REF THE REFS

Were I asked the name or even the description of any of the referees that worked during the



Richard Steele, pictured officiating the Oscar De La Hoya-Oba Carr fight, is one of a handful of refs who inject themselves into fights too frequently, says reader Dr. Edward Martin.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

most recent ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* shows, I would only know that they were all male. These men *did not* inject themselves into the action. They did the job the way it should be done.

On the opposite side of the coin, high-profile referees like Richard Steele, Jay Nady, Mitch Halpern, and Joe Cortez not only unnecessarily interfere with the action by nitpicking, but make some of the most horrendous judgments I've ever seen.

The most recent was the untimely stoppage of the Derrick "Smoke" Gainer-Diego Corrales IBF junior lightweight championship fight by none other than the ever-smiling Nady. And, as I suspected, Nady refused to be interviewed after the fight. Seems like these guys are untouchable. But then, it is hard to defend the indefensible. Oh yes, I must mention my favorite ref, Frank Cappuccino, with his famous "Both-a-yez shake hands ..."

Don't you agree that boxing would be better off without these incompetent officials?

DR. EDWARD MARTIN
Asheville, NC

AYALA'S THE MAN

Yes! A little guy gets Fighter of the Year. And it's my pick, Paulie Ayala, who beat previously undefeated Johnny Tapia in the Fight of the Year and deserved the award. When I saw your cover (April 2000) with Ayala on it, it persuaded me to buy THE RING.

KENNETH HISSNER
Collegeville, PA

GREAT GARTH AND GASPAR

Thank you very much for the stories of two very brave and entertaining fighters that made boxing so great back in the 1950s and '60s. I am referring to the accounts on Gaspar Ortega in the April 2000 issue and Garth Panter in the May edition. Both of these men were born about 40 or 45 years too soon. They would both have been champions if they were boxing today. I really enjoy features on boxers from that era.

ED MALLOY
San Carlos, CA

HAIL FREITAS

In the past year or so, a lot has been written about the supremacy of "Pretty Boy" Floyd Mayweather at 130 pounds. Some have suggested that, outside of Diego Corrales, there are no worthy opponents in sight for the former U.S. Olympian turned WBC super featherweight champ. I've got one: Brazilian knockout artist Acelino "Popo" Freitas.

Maybe his absence in discussions about junior lightweights is because he's had very little exposure in the Unites States, but Freitas really seems like he has all the tools needed to give Mayweather or Corrales the toughest fights of their careers. On the only occasion that I had the honor of watching Freitas in action about two years ago, he looked sensational, scoring a knockout with huge powershots thrown from unorthodox angles. Since that time, he has gone on to wreck everyone he's fought, including world-class contender Anatoly Alexandrov, whom Freitas sent to the hospital en route to winning the WBO title on a first-round kayo, and previously undefeated Englishman Barry Jones, whom Freitas gave the beating of a lifetime.

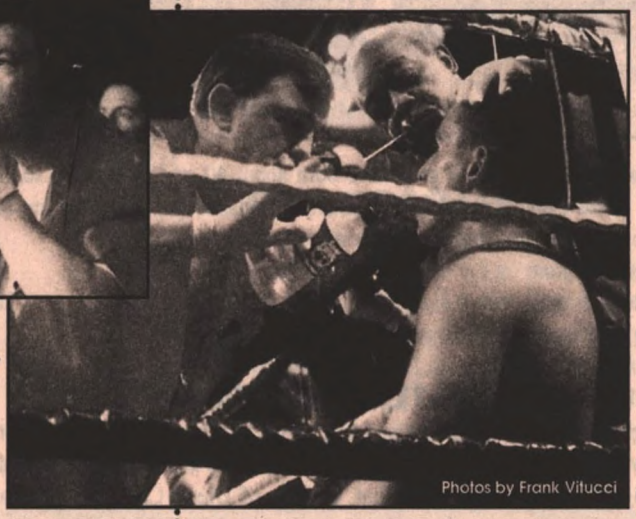
I've read that HBO is talking about showcasing Freitas sometime down the road, and I think they would be well-advised to do so. If he keeps going the way he has been thus far, he could be the one to derail the gravy trains of any of his peers at 130 pounds. Don't sleep on him!

PAUL HABERMAN
Washington, D.C. ■

ROUND ONE

A GIMMICK GONE AWRY

This wasn't supposed to happen. Dan Sheehan, a tough Irish pug from Lawrence, Massachusetts, was viewed as nothing more than a prop when he met undefeated prospect Elvir Muriqi in a six-round light heavyweight clash on March 24 at the legendary Blue Horizon in Philadelphia. The real focus was supposed to be on Muriqi and his trainer, Teddy Atlas, the color analyst for ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* telecast, who was experimenting with the dual role of donning the headset to comment on the fight while at the same time advising Muriqi.



Photos by Frank Vitucci

Atlas commentating from the corner (above) and advising between rounds (right)

It was a unique concept, giving viewers insight into the mind of the cornerman. And from a television standpoint, everything went well. For Atlas and Muriqi, however, it didn't quite go as planned. Sheehan, who came in with a 5-3 (2) record, pulled off the upset when Muriqi, who had already been penalized twice for low blows, was disqualified by referee John Carroll for hitting Sheehan below the belt with just 12 seconds left in the final round.

The loss was the first for "The Kosovo Kid," but it served as vindication for Sheehan. Before the fight, there were some doubts as to whether or not Sheehan would give a legitimate effort. In his last performance in Pennsylvania, a first-round knockout loss to Chris Mills in Scranton in June '99, the Boston-area slugger didn't put up much of a fight. This time, however, he gave it everything he had. Sheehan isn't as skilled as Muriqi, 13-1 (8), but he absorbed everything the 20-year-old could dish out and kept coming forward, constantly throwing punches.

"This is one of the happiest moments of my life," said Sheehan, who had just spoken to his father for the first time in 14 years two weeks prior to the Muriqi fight. "Because of my record, they thought it was going to be easy. No one gave me a chance. I read the comment Teddy Atlas made about not doing this a year from now, when Muriqi would be fighting 10-round fights, that this was a safe thing. The biggest thing is that the Pennsylvania Commissioner [Greg Sirb] thought I was going to take a dive."

"I questioned his professionalism, based on his last fight here," Sirb said. "I thought he didn't give a professional performance in the Mills fight. I told him before the Muriqi fight that I expected a better performance. This is the Blue Horizon, Philly; he better put on a good show. He answered in the affirmative. He's welcome back here anytime."

While Sheehan celebrated, Atlas still had to face ESPN2's cameras. He had initially disputed Carroll ruling the final punch low, but had the benefit of viewing the replay afterward and changed his opinion. "I can't argue with Carroll's call," Atlas said after finishing his commentating duties. "I don't think the ref had to stop the fight, but my fighter shouldn't have been in that position in the first place. This is a tough business. If Elvir can't take a loss and learn from it, he better pick another business."

At the time of the stoppage, Sheehan, with the help of the point deductions, was ahead on two of the scorecards, leading 47-46 according to Robert Grasso and 48-45 on Ron Greenley's card. George Hill had it 48-45 for Muriqi, who could have done no better than a draw if it had gone the distance.

—Joe Santoliquito

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

There seems to me more interest in Sonny Liston today than when he was the reigning heavyweight champion of the world. Although Liston has always had a cult following among boxing fans, he returned to mainstream consciousness in 1995 with the broadcast of HBO's Emmy-winning documentary, *Sonny Liston: The Mysterious Life And Death Of A Champion.* A Hollywood version of Liston's life called *Night Train*, starring Ving Rhames, is due to be released in mid-2000. Now comes *The Devil And Sonny Liston* (Little, Brown and Company, 259 pages, $24.95 hardcover), Nick Tosches' new biography of one of boxing's most enigmatic personalities.

Tosches, who has also written bios about Dean Martin and Jerry Lee Lewis, took the book's title from a story relayed to him by sportswriter Marc Kram, who claimed that Muhammad Ali once told him: "Liston was the Devil." While Tosches doesn't get that far out in his own hypothesis, there is quite a bit of mumbo jumbo about astrology and an African deity called Shango that adds little to our understanding of a man whose life was shrouded in mystery.

Liston's story has always been like an unfinished jigsaw puzzle, but because of Tosches' prodigious research, many—though certainly not all—of the missing pieces are now in place. The book does an excellent job of detailing Liston's almost lifelong ties to organized crime figures, debunks some myths, and makes a fairly strong case that Sonny threw both Ali fights because mobsters told him to. It does not, however, shed much new light on Liston's puzzling death. Many theories are explored, including Tosches', but readers expecting a definitive solution will be disappointed.

It is through the reminiscences of Foneda Cox, Liston's longtime friend and sparring partner, that the book allows us to get closer to Liston the man than in any other previously published account. For years Cox and Liston lived together, traveled together, partied together, and even shared sexual partners. Insight is also provided by Liston cronies Davey Pearl (the former referee), Lowell Powell (one of the fighter's bodyguards), and Doc Broadus (an early associate of George Foreman). Even so, when I'd finished the book, I felt I'd learned far more about the people surrounding Liston than Liston himself.

That being said, *The Devil And Sonny Liston* is strongly recommended. It's eminently readable, and while the life and death of Liston remains murky, thanks to Tosches, we now know much more than ever before.

—Nigel Collins

THE CURSE OF CLAY-BEY

As the old saying goes, it's better to be lucky than to be good, and you'll get no argument from Lawrence Clay-Bey on the validity of that maxim. Clay-Bey, though probably not a great heavyweight, is certainly a good one, but his luck ranks right up there with that of the Boston Red Sox or the castaways on *Gilligan's Island.* He was a little bit unlucky to draw eventual super heavyweight gold medalist Wladimir Klitschko in the first round at the 1996 Olympics, exiting early after losing a close decision. He was a whole lot unlucky to fracture the third metacarpal in his left hand three separate times just when it seemed his pro career was ready to take off. And he must have thought he was downright damned when he had to pull out of a scheduled April 1 fight with Chris Byrd after being diagnosed with retinal tears in both eyes less than three weeks before the fight.

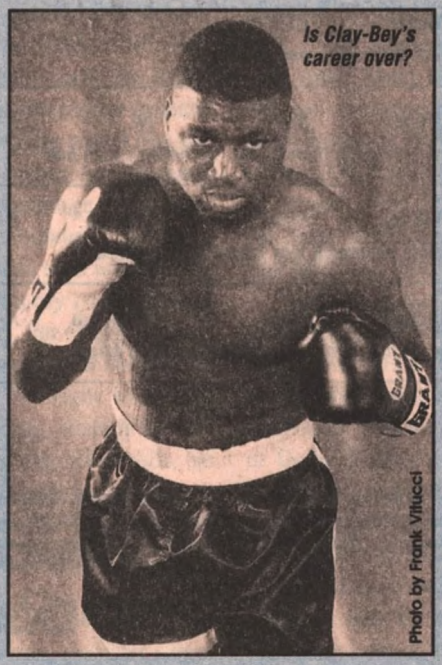

Is Clay-Bey's career over?

Photo by Frank Vitucci

"This is a complete shock to me," Clay-Bey, 34, said. "I have not had any symptoms. My vision test results were 20-20. Apparently, the tears are in the back of my eyes, so it wouldn't affect my vision until the damage got worse."

Though retinal surgery a couple of weeks later was declared a success, Clay-Bey, 11-0 (8), was left depressed and wondering whether there was any point in continuing to fight. He immediately began applying for non-boxing jobs, including the Connecticut corrections officer post he held before pursuing his boxing career. Promoter Dan Goossen remained optimistic, however.

"Lawrence has overcome every obstacle that has come his way," Goossen said. "Since turning pro at 31, when most fighters are considering retirement as a pro, not starting a career, it took great courage and confidence for Clay-Bey to do it. If Sugar Ray Leonard can come back from the same injury, I wouldn't be surprised if Lawrence did, too."

—Eric Raskin

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
3-24-00	Billy Irwin KO 7 John Bailey	ESPN2	l	C+	C	B
Bailey tough as nails, but bloodied and stopped by smoother, more experienced Irwin						
3-24-00	Dan Sheehan W. Disq 6 Elvir Muriqi	ESPN2	lh	C	B-	B+
"Kosovo Kid" melts under bright lights, gets outfought and chased for low blows						
3-24-00	Debind Thapa Tech. Draw 1 Dan Davis	ESPN2	b	C-	B	D
Promising matchup ends when headbutt opens cut on Davis' eye; watch Thapa						
3-24-00	James Butler KO 2 Arthur Allen	ESPN2	sm	B-	C+	B-
We don't know yet if Butler can fight, but he sure can punch; Allen starched						
3-25-00	Cesar Bazan KO 7 Jose Baltazar	Uni	jw	B	C-	C
A lot of fighters were hoping Bazan would go away after losing title; no such luck						
4-1-00	Chris Byrd KO 9 Vitaly Klitschko	HBO	h	B+	B+	C+
A Byrd punch injured Klitschko's rotator cuff? First we've heard of a guy having a glass shoulder						
4-1-00	Augie Sanchez KO 6 Jorge Paredes	FOXSN	f	C+	C+	B-
Streaking Sanchez closes in on title shot with another impressive stoppage						
4-1-00	Robert Davis KO 5 Keith McKnight	FOXSN	h	C	C-	D+
Undefeated Davis scores four knockdowns en route to victory; he may be worth watching						
4-7-00	Robert Frazier W 10 Purcell Miller	ESPN2	jm	C	B+	B+
Quick-fisted Frazier stays a step ahead of Miller to take close nod in good scrap						
4-7-00	Frank Houghtaling W 6 Michael McFail	ESPN2	jm	D	C	C+
Houghtaling does just enough to take decision over flighty McFail						
4-7-00	Angel Vazquez W 12 Bernard Harris	ESPN2	f	B-	C+	C
Anyone else get the sense that Vazquez' best chance already came and went?						
4-8-00	Randall Bailey KO 6 Rocky Martinez	Show	jw	B	D-	C+
If there's a fighter today who punches with more conviction than Bailey, we haven't seen him						
4-8-00	**Fabrice Tiozzo KO 6 Valery Vikhor**	**Show**	**WBA c**	**B+**	**D-**	**D+**
The only thing that kept this from being a horrible mismatch was Tiozzo's clumsiness						
4-8-00	**Bruno Girard W 12 Byron Mitchell**	**Show**	**WBA sm**	**A-**	**B+**	**B**
All the evidence you need that, most of the time, desire is far more important than talent						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Tel—Telemundo

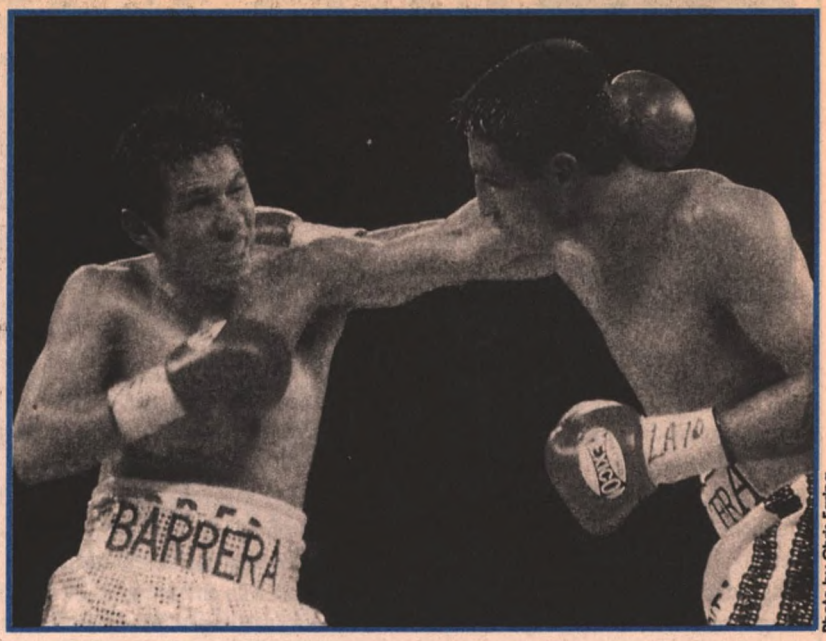


Photo by Chris Farina

Will Sirb's (above) study prevent decisions like Barrera-Morales (right)?

"Erik Morales W 12 Marco Antonio Barrera." That's the way it will go into the books and, many years down the road, that's the way it will be remembered, without a little parenthetical phrase attached to tell everyone what really happened in the fight. Those three ringside judges always get the final say, regardless of how incompetent or corrupt anyone may suspect them of being.

Bad judging has long been just another one of boxing's ills that the fans come to expect and accept, but the Association of Boxing Commissions and its president, Greg Sirb, are trying to bring about change by taking steps to identify and eliminate the offending officials. Sirb recently compiled for the use of other commission members the first annual World Judges Report, a statistical breakdown of judges working title fights sanctioned by the WBA, WBC, IBF, WBO, and WBU from 1996-'98 that may help clarify the merits and qualifications of the scorers. Among the information included in the report: what percentage of the rounds a judge scored that saw him/her the lone dissenter from the other two judges; how frequently a judge scored even rounds; and in what percentage of the bouts that went the distance the judge scored for the eventual winner.

The factor that makes the report somewhat objectionable and unreliable is the reality that being in the minority on the scoring of a round or a fight is not always a bad thing. For example, veteran Nevada judge Bill Graham is made to look inferior because his score in favor of Keith Mullings in his '97 fight with Raul Marquez was overruled by the other two judges, when in fact his scorecard was the only one that made any sense. Meanwhile, his off-base card that read 117-111 for Lennox Lewis in the rematch with Evander Holyfield (which was too recent for inclusion in the ABC's report), would simply make him look proficient for going with the eventual winner.

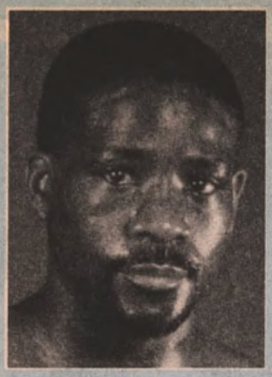
Another Nevada judge, Jerry Roth, looks on the surface like one of the best in the business. He disagreed with the other judges on just 10 percent of the rounds (the world average was 15 percent), scored no even rounds, and sided with the winner in all eight of the title bouts he worked that went the distance. What you don't see there is that Roth handed in a god-awful 116-110 card in favor of Oscar De La Hoya in his '97 fight with Pernell Whitaker and that he sided with Laurent Boudouani in his '98 rematch with Guillermo Jones and with Junior Jones in his '97 rematch with Barrera, fights many thought should have gone the other way. The report doesn't include his 115-113 card for Felix Trinidad over De La Hoya, another mild head-scratcher that would make Roth look good statistically.

Perhaps the most useful piece of information is the percentage of rounds a judge scores even. The world average was four percent, a very reasonable number. There's no shame in scoring an even round every now and again, even for professional judges who are supposed to be experts at discerning which fighter is doing the better work. But Venezuela's Rafael Carabano, the king of the 10-10 round, somehow couldn't pick a winner a staggering 21 percent of the time. As further proof of how suspect Carabano has been, he was among the trio that robbed William Joppy in his first fight with Julio Cesar Green.

When all is said and done, the ABC's report may be helpful to consult before settling on a judge, but it can't be relied upon to reveal the whole truth. A more simple system, whereby the judges who hand in incomprehensible, universally criticized cards (like Eugenia Williams' in the first Lewis-Holyfield fight or Dalby Shirley's in Morales-Barrera) are banished to lesser bouts until they've re-proven themselves, still seems the best way to make the judging in major fights more reliable. Nonetheless, the ABC's report is a step in the right direction. The 1999 results are still being compiled, but as soon as they are available, look for a full statistical printout of the findings in an upcoming issue of THE RING.

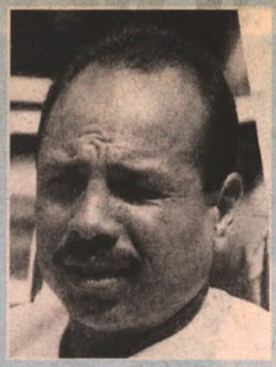
—Eric Raskin

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Johnston: Drug-testing controversy

WBC lightweight champ **Stevie Johnston**, one of the last boxers you'd expect to find caught up in a scandal, is at the center of a storm resulting from his November '99 title defense in England against Briton **Billy Schwer**. Johnston failed the post-fight drug test, which said he had four times the permissible level of ephedrine, a supposedly safe stimulant, in his system. Johnston's explanation was that he had taken Nyquill for a cold before the fight, but the excuse didn't satisfy the British Boxing Board of Control since ephedrine is not contained in Nyquill. The WBC had not made a move to strip Johnston of its title as of press time, angering both the British Board and Schwer, who is threatening legal action. "I could sue Johnston for assault," Schwer said, "because I signed to fight him in a boxing match and not someone with an illegal substance in his body" ... Former heavyweight champ **Joe Frazier** was defeated in the courtroom in mid-March when an eight-member U.S. District Court jury in Philadelphia rejected his claims that he was injured by police mistreatment and maliciously prosecuted following a drunk driving arrest in 1998. Frazier had been acquitted of the drunk driving charge shortly after the arrest ... **William Eaddy**, a 33-year-old former employee of former **Mike Tyson** co-manager **Rory Holloway**, was arrested in Albany, New York, in early-April when he was caught trying to sell two of Tyson's stolen championship belts on the Internet auction site eBay. Eaddy was charged with second-degree criminal possession of stolen property, the WBC belt Tyson won in 1986 and the WBA belt he picked up in '87, which were reported stolen from a Las Vegas storage locker. Initial rumors implicating Holloway in the crime are false, according to Las Vegas police, who list Holloway as a victim along with Tyson. In case you're curious, the highest eBay bid for either belt was $9,100. The belts are said to be valued at about $50,000 apiece ... Comebacking **Tony Ayala Jr.** signed a four-fight promotional deal with Boxing Management Inc. in late-March. "If things go well, Tony can make up to $1-million or more," said BMI President **Lester Bedford** ... **Angel Carbajal**, the 27-year-old brother of two-time former world junior flyweight champion **Michael Carbajal**, was shot to death outside a Phoenix, Arizona, bar in late-March. Police said the shooting was gang-related ... A couple of other deaths to report: **Luis Henriquez**, a longtime cornerman of **Roberto Duran**, died of colon cancer at the age of 62. And former Japanese featherweight champ **Nobutoshi Hiranaka**, a two-time world title challenger, died in a car accident in his native Okinawa at the age of 31. Hiranaka, who fell short in bids to dethrone WBA feather champ **Eloy Rojas** in '95 and WBC champ **Luisito Espinosa** in '96, was still active with a record 18-6-1 (11) at the time of his death.



Ayala: New four-fight deal

THE PUNCHLINES

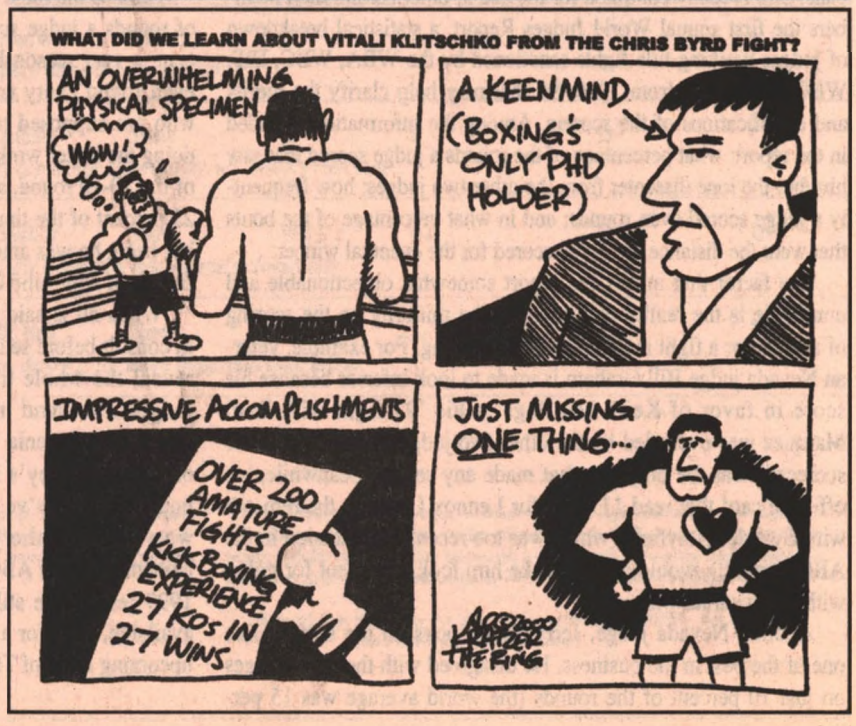
"It's easy to look fast when you're a rabbit going against a bunch of turtles."

—Antonio Tarver, on the quality of Roy Jones' recent opposition

"Because my wife put her foot down on that."

—George Foreman, explaining why his fighting daughter Freeda wasn't named Georgette

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended April 12, 2000)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES** Light Heavyweight
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Junior Middleweight
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Junior Lightweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Welterweight
5. **SHANE MOSLEY** Welterweight
6. **MARK JOHNSON** Junior Bantamweight
7. **RICARDO LOPEZ** Junior Flyweight
8. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Middleweight
9. **STEVE JOHNSTON** Lightweight
10. **NASEEM HAMED** Featherweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Chris Byrd's upset TKO of Vitaly Klitschko was good enough to advance him from 10th to eighth, while Klitschko (formerly number six) departs. The shakeup also causes Andrew Golota (seventh last issue) and Oleg Maskaev (eighth last issue) to move up one spot each to sixth and seventh, respectively. Klitschko's exit creates a vacancy at number 10 that is filled by Derrick Jefferson. Even though a federal judge has ordered top-rated Lennox Lewis to vacate the WBA title if he goes through with his April 29 fight with Michael Grant, the undisputed champ has until that date to appeal. Therefore, for the time being, the WBA tag still appears next to his name.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: New WBA champion Bruno Girard (previously unranked) enters at number two thanks to the Frenchman's title-winning 12-round decision over Byron Mitchell (second last issue). The loss plummets Mitchell to sixth. Robin Reid, who hasn't fought since February 13, 1999, is gone due to inactivity.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Colin Dunne (seventh last issue) drops out because he hasn't fought since February 27, 1999. This allows Artur Grigorian (formerly eighth), James Leija (previously ninth), and Victoriano Sosa (10th last issue) to all move up one spot, while Billy Schwer is back on board at number 10.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Luis Bolano (seventh last issue) exits because he hasn't fought since March 13, 1999. Bolano's departure pushes Ratanachai Vorapin (formerly eighth), Joel Luna-Zarate (ninth last issue), and Eric Morel (previously 10th) up one position each. Undefeated Samson Toyota-Thailand enters at number 10.

FLYWEIGHTS: Former number-six contender Hugo Soto, also idle since March 13, 1999, is banished for inactivity. This boosts everybody ranked below him—Saen Sor Ploenchit, Jose Bonilla, Alejandro Montiel, and Isidro Garcia–up one notch each and makes room for David Guerault at number 10.

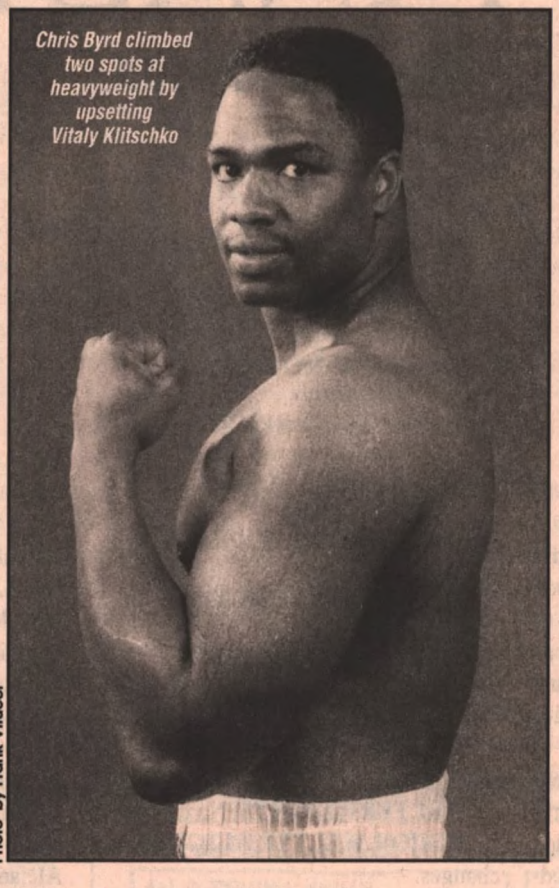
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Joma Gamboa (10th last issue) is currently campaigning at strawweight and is now ranked among the 105-pounders. Jorge Arce fills Gamboa's old spot.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Rocky Lin (seventh last issue), who hasn't fought since August 23, 1998, departs, as does Oswaldo Guerrero (10th last issue). Guerrero is now a junior fly. The resulting shuffle raises Kermin Guardia (eighth last issue) and Jose Garcia (ninth last issue) up one step each, while Joma Gamboa enters at ninth and Daniel Reyes (previously unranked) comes in at number 10.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended April 12, 2000



Chris Byrd climbed two spots at heavyweight by upsetting Vitaly Klitschko

Photo by Frank Vitucci

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *35-1-1 (WBA/WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *36-4-1*
3. **MICHAEL GRANT** Norristown, PA *31-0*
4. **DAVID TUA** Totowa, NJ *35-1*
5. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY *47-3*
6. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL *34-4*
7. **OLEG MASKAEV** Staten Island, NY *19-2*
8. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *31-1*
9. **DAVID IZON** Pensacola, FL *25-3*
10. **DERRICK JEFFERSON** Detroit, MI *22-1-1*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Puerto Rico *37-0 (WBA Champ)*
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA *18-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **DAVID REID** Philadelphia, PA *14-1*
4. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana *34-1-1*
5. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO** Spain *48-4 (WBC Champ)*
6. **HARRY SIMON** Namibia *19-0*
7. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL *39-3*
8. **KEITH MULLINGS** Brooklyn, NY *16-6-1*
9. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI *40-2*
10. **TONY MARSHALL** Albany, NY *34-7-6*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **NASEEM HAMED** England *34-0*
2. **FRED NORWOOD** St. Louis, MO *36-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **PAUL INGLE** England *22-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **CESAR SOTO** Mexico *53-8-2*
5. **LUISITO ESPINOSA** Philippines *44-8*
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico *30-2*
7. **JULIO PABLO CHACON** Argentina *36-0*
8. **MANUEL MEDINA** Mexico *56-11*
9. **MBULELO BOTILE** South Africa *26-1*
10. **JUAN CARLOS RAMIREZ** Mexico *20-2*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico *49-3*
2. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico *36-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **BONES ADAMS** Henderson, KY *39-3-3 (WBA Champ)*
4. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa *30-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
5. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH** Las Vegas, NV *23-3*
6. **NESTOR GARZA** Mexico *38-2*
7. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** Mexico *26-1-1*
8. **ANTONIO CERMENO** Venezuela *37-3*
9. **MANNY PACQUAIO** Philippines *27-2*
10. **MICHAEL BRODIE** England *28-0*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH *20-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **PAULIE AYALA** Ft. Worth, TX *30-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM *47-1-2*
4. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand *26-1 (WBC Champ)*
5. **NANA KONADU** Ghana *40-4-1*
6. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO** Colombia *42-2*
7. **JULIO GAMBOA** Nicaragua *24-4*
8. **CUAUHTEMOC GOMEZ** Mexico *47-7*
9. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark *45-2*
10. **ADAN VARGAS** Mexico *33-2-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany 30-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 24-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France 42-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 37-12-1
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina 29-3-1
6. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Pensacola, FL 32-5-1
7. **JAMES TONEY**
   Las Vegas, NV 59-4-2
8. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 25-5
9. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 45-3
10. **SAUL MONTANA**
    Mexico 33-7

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 41-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 41-0
3. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 40-6-1
4. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI**
   Germany 40-4-1
5. **MICHAEL NUNN**
   Davenport, IA 54-4
6. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 18-0-1
7. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 16-0
8. **DAVID TELESCO**
   Port Chester, NY 23-3
9. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 38-3
10. **RICHARD HALL**
    Winter Haven, FL 24-1

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 18-0 (IBF Champ)
2. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 37-3-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 28-0
4. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 18-0 (WBC Champ)
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 35-6
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 20-1-1
7. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX 37-6
8. **FRANKIE LILES**
   N. Hollywood, CA 32-2
9. **RICHIE WOODHALL**
   England 25-2
10. **GLENN CATLEY**
    England 25-3

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA 36-2-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 29-1-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. 34-2 (WBC Champ)
4. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 30-3-1
5. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 23-3-1
6. **ARMAND KRAJNC**
   Sweden 23-0
7. **ROBERT McCRACKEN**
   England 33-0
8. **DAVEY HILTON**
   Canada 38-1-3
9. **BERT SCHENK**
   Germany 23-0
10. **RITO RUVALCABA**
    Mexico 27-2

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA 32-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA 25-3 (WBA Champ)
3. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 34-0
4. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 31-0
5. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI 50-3-1
6. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
   Australia 25-0-1
7. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico 30-4-1
8. **AHMED KATEJEV**
   Russia 25-0
9. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 19-0
10. **DERRELL COLEY**
    Capitol Heights, MD 34-2-2

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia 24-1-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 46-2 (WBA Champ)
3. **TERRONN MILLETT**
   St. Louis, MO 22-1-1
4. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 22-0 (IBF Champ)
5. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL 21-0
6. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 30-2
7. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 35-9
8. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 31-4
9. **REGGIE GREEN**
   Clinton, MD 31-4
10. **TEDDY REID**
    Washington, D.C. 16-3-1

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 30-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 30-4-1
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 29-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **CESAR BAZAN**
   Mexico 37-3-1
5. **IVAN ROBINSON**
   Philadelphia, PA 29-3
6. **GILBERTO SERRANO**
   Venezuela 20-4-1 (WBA Champ)
7. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 29-0
8. **JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX 39-4-2
9. **VICTORIANO SOSA**
   Dominican Republic 24-2-1
10. **BILLY SCHWER**
    England 38-4

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 23-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 31-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea 21-0-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ROBERTO GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA 32-1
5. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 12-2-1
6. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea 27-3-1
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Austin, TX 30-1
8. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 25-0
9. **GOYO VARGAS**
   Mexico 40-7-1
10. **JOHN BROWN**
    Atlantic City, NJ 20-7

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 38-1
2. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea 17-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **HIDEKI TODAKA**
   Japan 16-2-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 33-8-3
5. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 40-3-2
6. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand 22-1-1
7. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
   Thailand 36-4
8. **JOEL LUNA-ZARATE**
   Mexico 33-3-2
9. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 24-0
10. **SAMSON TOYOTA-THAILAND**
    Thailand 35-0

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **SORNPICHAI SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 19-0 (WBA Champ)
2. **MEDGOEN TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 20-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 24-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand 37-2
5. **LEO GAMEZ**
   Venezuela 32-7-1
6. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 38-1
7. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela 27-5
8. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 42-3
9. **ISIDRO GARCIA**
   Los Angeles, CA 20-1-1
10. **DAVID GUERAULT**
    France 16-0

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 48-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 21-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **PICHIT C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 22-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 26-1-1
5. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand 42-3-1
6. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 17-0
7. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa 50-11-2
8. **MELCHOR COB-CASTRO**
   Mexico 58-6-4
9. **WILL GRIGSBY**
   St. Paul, MN 14-2-1
10. **JORGE ARCE**
    Mexico 22-3-1

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 15-2-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 22-1-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 41-1-1
4. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 12-1-1 (WBA Champ)
5. **WANDEE SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 25-4
6. **SONGKRAM PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 20-2-1
7. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Columbia 32-2
8. **JOSE GARCIA**
   Colombia 22-5-1
9. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 28-5-1
10. **DANIEL REYES**
    Colombia 24-0

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NEW FACES

LEONARD DORIN

Lightweight

By Joe Santoliquito

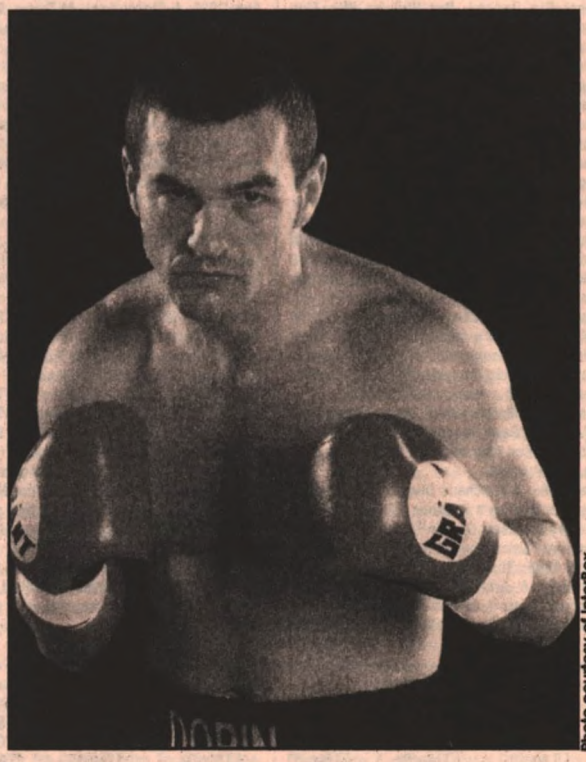


Photo courtesy of InterBox

Leonard Dorin's feet may dangle from the edge of park benches. He may have trouble reaching for cereal boxes on the top of grocery shelves, and his driver's seat may be just inches from his steering wheel. Dorin, however, has not let his shortness become a shortcoming in the ring.

Dorin is a stubby 5'4" lightweight who has enjoyed an enormous wealth of amateur success, registering 239 victories and collecting a pair of Olympic bronze medals for Romania, in Barcelona in 1992 and in Atlanta in '96. Dorin recalls a story from the Barcelona Games, when some of his competitors were laughing in disbelief at how short Dorin was for a lightweight. Dorin wound up laughing last by taking home a medal, and he is still laughing as a successful pro with a 14-0 (4) record.

"In fact, there are advantages to being small," Dorin said in his thick Romanian accent. "When I was at the weigh-in of the 1995 world amateur championship, there was this one guy laughing at me because I was so short to be a lightweight. He couldn't believe it. But it's not really a problem to me. I'm used to that. When I won the bronze medal in Barcelona, I beat the people who laughed at me.

"I'll never be able to outbox a guy with a long reach, I realize that. When I'm inside, I wear my opponent down and work his body. I keep putting pressure on them. I want to discourage them, because I'm always in front of them. I've been in boxing so long, I used to fight amateur guys of all sizes, so I'm used to facing very, very tall guys. I've been doing it all my life; it's like automatic for me."

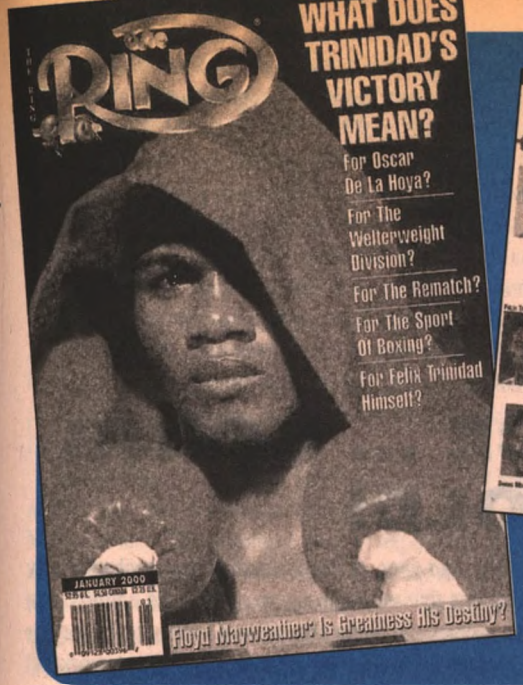
The Canada-based Dorin, 29, has a peek-a-boo style, wading through opponents' punches until he finds his range. Then he likes to hammer foes to the body and break

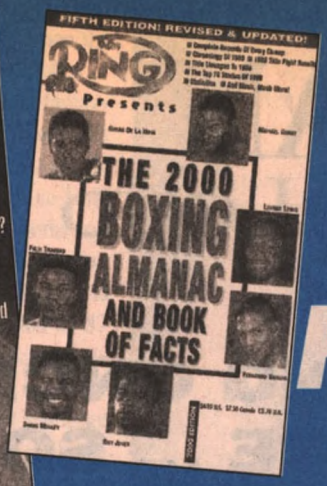
(Continued on page 59)

PRO RECORD

1998		
April 24	Jerry Villareal, Sherbrooke, Quebec	W 4
May 5	Martin Aubut, Trois Rivieres, Quebec	W 6
May 28	Sean Knight, White Plains, NY	W 6
Sept. 24	Don Sponagle, Montreal, Quebec	KO 2
Oct. 14	Michael Balagna, Montreal	KO 1
Nov. 6	Craig Thomas, Montreal	W 8
Nov. 27	Steve Valdez, Montreal	KO 6
1999		
Feb. 5	Bernard Harris, Montreal	W 10
April 30	Dillon Carew, Verona, NY	W 12
Oct. 13	Jean-Luc Morin, Montreal	KO 3
Oct. 29	Darien Ford, Montreal	W 8
Dec. 10	Verdell Smith, Montreal	W 10
2000		
March 7	Rudolfo Lunsford, Montreal	W 10
April 6	Gustavo Cuello, Toronto, Ontario	W 10

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
14	14	0	0	4





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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

GOING ONCE ... GOING TWICE ... SOLD!

Either disposable income is more disposable than ever, or hero worship has reached a new level. These memorabilia and fantasy auctions that are popping up around the country like crazy prove that money is no object when it comes to being able to own a piece of history or experience something you can tell your grandchildren about—not to mention rub your co-workers' faces in—for years to come.

One recent event in Manhattan saw the auctioning of, among other things, the opportunity to throw out the first pitch at a New York Yankees game, a golf date with NFL great Dan Marino, a seat next to the Los Angeles Lakers' bench for a clash with the San Antonio Spurs, and the chance to take batting practice before baseball's All-Star Game. At another auction, an Emmy once awarded to CBS legend Edward R. Murrow sold for $5,482, a spacesuit worn by Larry Hagman on *I Dream Of Jeannie* went for $11,500, and Batman and Robin costumes from the *Batman* television series fetched $68,500.

Who says it's tough finding a birthday gift for Dad?

What the auction houses don't yet know is that there's a great untapped market out there when it comes to peddling cherished items and fulfilling fantasies. That market, of course, is fight fans. A gold mine awaits, and if nobody else is going to step up and grab the Raging Bull by the horns, then allow me to make my move and welcome you to THE RING's first-ever boxing auction. No, it's not a silent auction. With everyone from Prince Naseem Hamed to Johnny Tapia in the house, how could it be?

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Oscar and Gil before the pink slip

Help yourself to a glass of champagne and a canape, find a seat, and we'll get started. By the way, we accept cash, checks, travelers cheques, and all major credit cards.

Our first item up for bids is this pink slip signed by all of the trainers Oscar De La Hoya has fired since he turned pro. Don't be turned off by the fact that you can't read any of the signatures. There were so many guys providing their John Hancocks that they had to write very small. See, right here you can make out the letters, "E-m-a-n-u-e-l S-t-e-w-a-r-d." Rest assured that this item comes with a magnifying glass and a certificate of authenticity. We'll start the bidding at $500. Do I hear $525?

Item Number Two is a season ticket to promoter Cedric Kushner's "Heavyweight Explosion" cards. Let's open the bidding at $5. Do I hear $6? No? Okay, how about *$4?*

Coming up for bids now is one of our unique fantasy packages. It's the opportunity for you or someone you know to get weighed in by the New York State Athletic Commission. Talk about a great gift for the not-so-little lady. After she's stuffed herself like a rhino for months and seen her thighs expand to the size of Butterbean's, she can go down to the commission office, step on the scale, and have her weight announced and officially recorded as 87 pounds. A great morale booster that's ideal for Valentine's Day. Opening bid is $1,200.

Speaking of holidays, our second fantasy package allows you and a guest to spend Father's Day with the Mayweathers. The highlight of your experience will come after dinner, when the two Floyds head out to the backyard for a heartwarming father-and-son catch. Junior will try to catch his father with a left hook and Senior will try to catch his son with a right cross. The bidding starts at $2,000. Do I hear $2,500?

Item Number Three is a copy of The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, autographed by HBO broadcaster Jim Lampley. Let's see here, the inscription reads, "Hoping your life is salubrious and sanguine, devoid of consternation and sated with delectations. Peace and love, Lamps." The proffering commences at $50. Do my auditory receptors acknowledge $55?

What's next? Looks like another fantasy package. It's the chance to work as an announcer on HBO's *KO Nation* telecasts. *Hmmm.* Juding by the names of the talent already assembled, which includes Ed Lover, Fran Charles, and Max Glazer, it appears that these jobs have already been auctioned off. Bidding starts at $1,750 for a hosting job, $1,500 for an analyst's position, and $1,000 to do blow-by-blow.

Item Number Four is the actual eye chart used to examine judges Dalby Shirley and Carol Castellano after they declared Erik Morales the victor in his WBC super bantamweight title defense against Marco Antonio Barrera. For fun, we tried to get Shirley and Castellano to sign the chart, right beneath the big "E." Unfortunately, while attempting to find the E, they mistakenly signed the wall of the doctor's office instead. Opening bid is $100.

Item Number Five is one no true boxing fan wants to be without. It's a gift certificate for a free visit to Fernando Vargas' hair stylist. It's good for any date, though we'd advise stopping by around Halloween. All right, we're starting the bidding at $75. Do I hear $100? Yes, there's $100. Do I hear $150? No? Going once ... going twice ... sold for $100 to the man with the sunglasses and the seeing eye dog.

Item Number Six is a case of Jack Daniel's, a must if you're going to play boxing's favorite new drinking game. Here's how it works: You watch a Christy Martin bout, and everytime she curses, bleeds, walks into a punch with her hands down, or is awarded a round she doesn't deserve, you down a shot. If you're lucky, the case should probably last you through her next three outings. The bidding starts at $300. Do I hear $350?

Our next fantasy package should be very popular. Outbid that pretentious big shot sitting next to you and you'll get the opportunity to take a ride with Hamed on his magic carpet to any destination within the Continental United States, Canada, or Mexico. You'll even have your choice of in-flight movies: *Aladdin* or a replay of The Prince's knockout of Vuyani Bungu. If you choose the latter, don't fret. Bungu will be returned to his full, upright position in preparation for landing. Let's start the bidding at $10,000.

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Finally, our last item up for auction today is a rating from the alphabet body of your choice in the weight class of your choice. Yes, you're guaranteed to land in the top 10 within a month and thus be eligible for a shot at the world title. The opening bid is ... *um* ... we're not sure. We'll have to get back to you after we contact the organization's bagmen and find out what a rating is selling for these days.

Perhaps we'll put that rating up for bids at the next auction—along with a *Gomer Pyle U.S.M.C.* videocassette signed by Riddick Bowe, glass fragments from David Reid's shattered jaw, the "Smoke" detector that sounded at ringside just before Diego Corrales extinguished Derrick Gainer, a film of Mia St. John jumping rope in a tank top, and a number of fantasy packages including the opportunity to get sucker-punched by Lucia Rijker and a chance to be adopted into that most loving of families, the Duvas.

That's all for now. Thank you for attending, and arrive home safely. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Maybe a good choking is all light heavyweight prospect Elvir Muriqi needs to convince him to keep his punches up. After losing by disqualification to Dan Sheehan in an ESPN2-televised bout, Muriqi was taught a valuable lesson by throttling trainer Teddy Atlas.

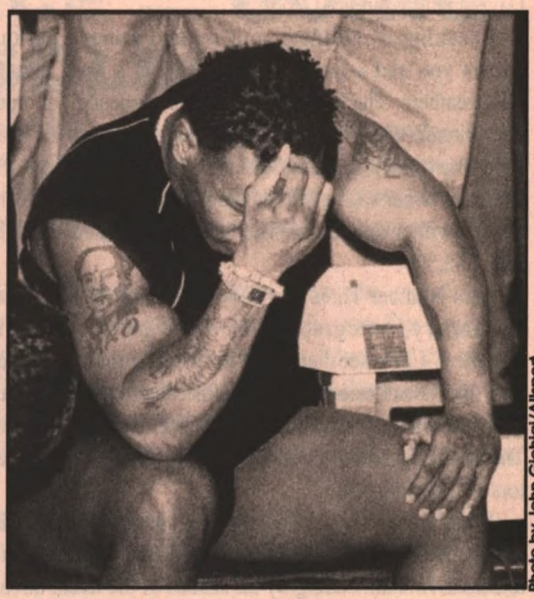


Photo by John Gichigi/Allsport

Mike Tyson's interpretation of The Thinker. Insert one of a trillion possible jokes here.

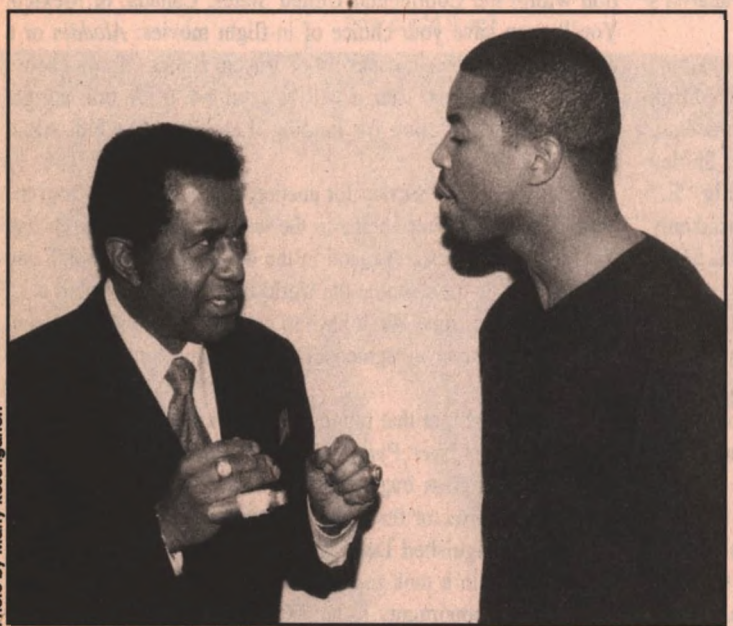


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Former WBA 154-pound champ David Reid seems to be paying close attention as Hall of Fame trainer Emanuel Steward explains that his punches would be much more effective if he wore two huge gold rings and a hunk of metal on his pinky finger. "I'm surprised Al Mitchell never taught you that," Steward said.

Photo by Wayne J. Nadorf

We'll often run photos of attractive females in The Ring even without an excuse, but this is one we actually have a reason to include. That's Oscar De La Hoya's girlfriend, actress Shanna Moakler, enjoying the press conference after "The Golden Boy's" win over Derrell Coley in February.

Photo by George Azar/Prince Promotions

Practice for "The Prince": Naseem Hamed takes a test flight on his magic carpet in preparation for his memorable ring entrance at the Olympia in London on March 11. Unfortunately, we don't have a photo of Naz rubbing Jim Lampley's head and making three wishes while referring to the HBO broadcaster as his "Magic Lamps."

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Mike Tidline-El proves himself to be in possession of boxing's most confused gimmick, as he calls himself "The Dog Catcher," yet comes into the ring dressed like a dog. Is he trying to catch himself? Whatever the case, the D.C.-area junior welterweight is no dog in the ring, as he can generally be counted on to give an exciting, determined effort.

Hall of Fame heavyweight Joe Frazier demonstrates on New Jersey State Athletic Commission head Larry Hazzard the hold the Philadelphia cops used to injure his shoulder. Some of Hazzard's enemies were probably pulling for Smokin' Joe to demonstrate his famous left hook on Hazzard as well.

Photo by Ray Bailey

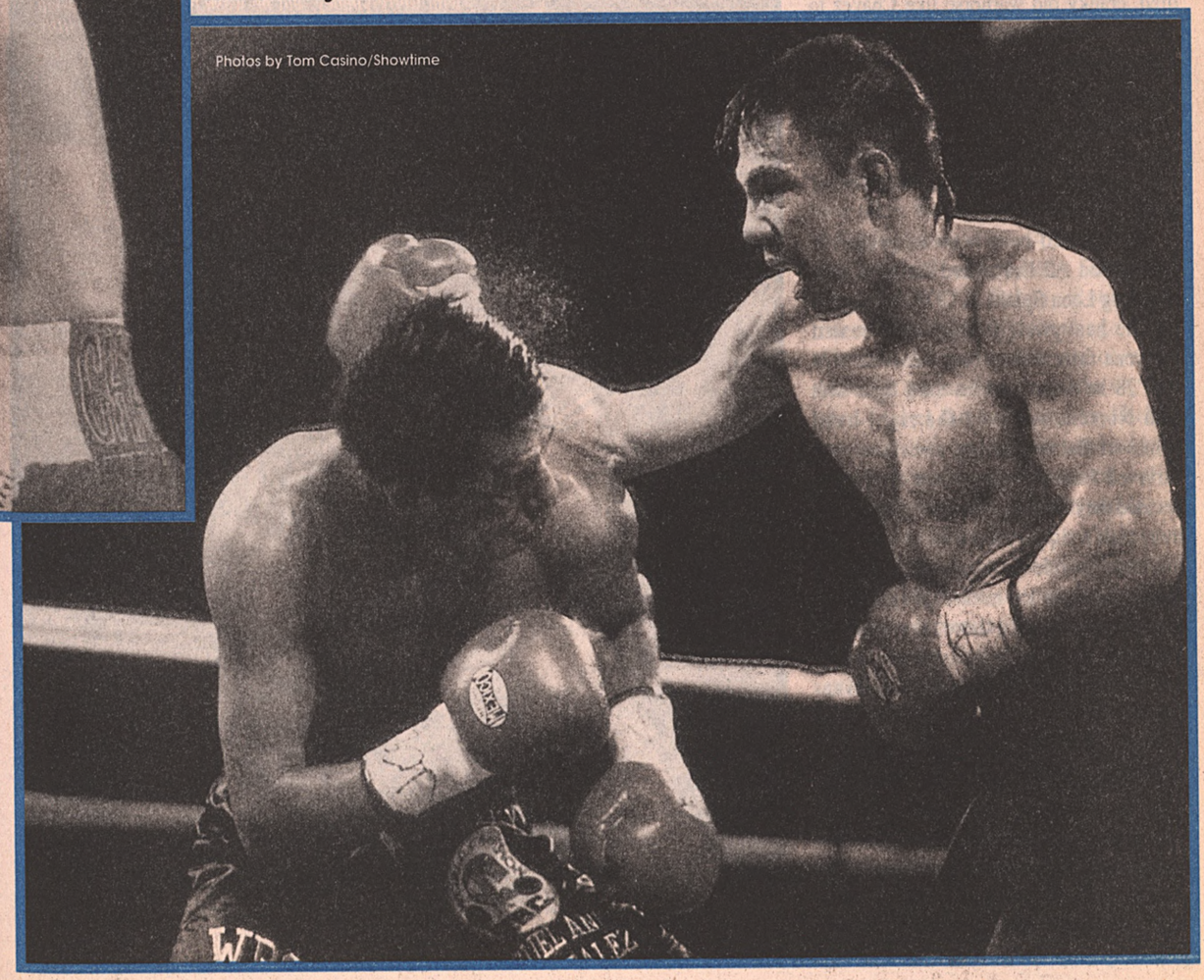
NOSTALGIA CORNER

Judd Hirsch has to step in between former welterweight champ Carlos Palomino and actor (and ex-boxer) Tony Danza as they prepare to go at it in a scene from **Taxi**. *It's rumored that Danza asked Palomino a few years later to guest star on an episode of* **Who's The Boss?**, *but Palomino, having standards, politely turned him down.*

THE FINAL BEATING

Boxing's Not-So-Gentle Persuader

Considering the way Julio Cesar Chavez was dominated by journeyman Willy Wise last October (left), and the way Kostya Tszyu brutalized Miguel Angel Gonzalez a few months earlier (below), this fight has all the makings of a one-sided slaughter. But if that's what it takes to convince Chavez to retire, then this mismatch will have some redeeming value.



Photos by Tom Casino/Showtime

By William Dettloff

If everything goes according to plan, on July 1, Julio Cesar Chavez, the once-great Mexican warrior, will get another shot at a world title against WBC super lightweight wrecking ball Kostya Tszyu. Don't ask who came up with the plan, because if you don't know the answer to that by now, you haven't been paying much attention.

Chavez has always had friends in high places. Even when warring with Don King, which is often, he has the support of compatriot and WBC President Jose Sulaiman. And when he gets back on good terms with King, which is always the case sooner or later, he is assured of a high ranking and the benefit of the doubt. He never used to need that, but he's been shot for four or five years now, and shot fighters with bad backs and a weakness for beer need a break every now and again, especially if they're living legends.

So when Chavez lost by a mile to journeyman Willy Wise last October, it might have looked to everyone else like he blew the shot at Tszyu, and that he might get to keep his nose in the front of his face after all. A lot of Chavez supporters were quietly happy about it. Better to be outboxed by a marshmallow like Wise than plowed over by a tank like Tszyu. But Sulaiman took care of that, ruling that since the Wise fight occurred at 147 rather than 140, Chavez' number-one ranking at junior welter was unaffected, and the Tszyu fight was still on. With friends like these ...

Of course, Chavez didn't train a lick for Wise, who's a heck of a nice guy with a good story, but not much of a fighter. Even at 37, "The Lion Of Culiacan" is better than he showed that night, but not near enough to handle Tszyu, a flawed but dynamite-punching offensive machine. Las Vegas oddsmaker Herb Lambeck calls Tszyu a 100-1 favorite. This is not an even matchup. It's not a competitive matchup, or even a fair one. There is every likelihood that Chavez will get beaten up, perhaps very badly, for as long as it lasts. For some, it will be hard to watch.

Some of the fight game's moralists—there's an oxymoron for you—are lobbying for the bout to be canceled on the grounds that it's a gross mismatch. Put aside for the moment that these same pacifists were nowhere to be seen when Rick Frazier was climbing into the ring to face Roy Jones, or that they utter nary a word of protest when hundreds of other overmatched fighters get their clocks cleaned in clubs and casinos every weekend for a hell of a lot fewer pesos than Chavez will take home.

What these misguided few are forgetting is that fighters—especially great fighters, and Chavez, at his best, was one of the great ones—quite often need to suffer a sound, one-sided beating in order to be convinced that their days as a champion, or even an upper-echelon fighter, are over. The loss to Wise, which Chavez can at least partially attribute to lax training, would never be sufficient to make him consider retirement; there are too many excuses. But a brutal, painful loss to Tszyu, when Chavez is in the best shape

After a two-year retirement, Muhammad Ali tried to come back against the best heavyweight in the world at the time, Larry Holmes, with disastrous results. Ali lost by TKO after the 10th round and then lost a year later to Trevor Berbick before finally quitting.

But Ali wasn't convinced that he was done. As much as fighters say they want to go out on top, they can't. They have to be convinced, and Ali's turn, one would have thought, came over 10 horribly one-sided rounds against a young, sharp Larry Holmes, the WBC heavyweight champion. Ali could do nothing but soak up punches all night until Angelo Dundee finally stopped it. Afterward, Ali's terrible weakness was blamed largely on the thyroid hormone pills he had taken throughout training to lose weight. He had an excuse. Almost a year later, the ordinary but gleefully young Trevor Berbick pounded him for 10 rounds in the Bahamas. Ali, at 38, was convinced.

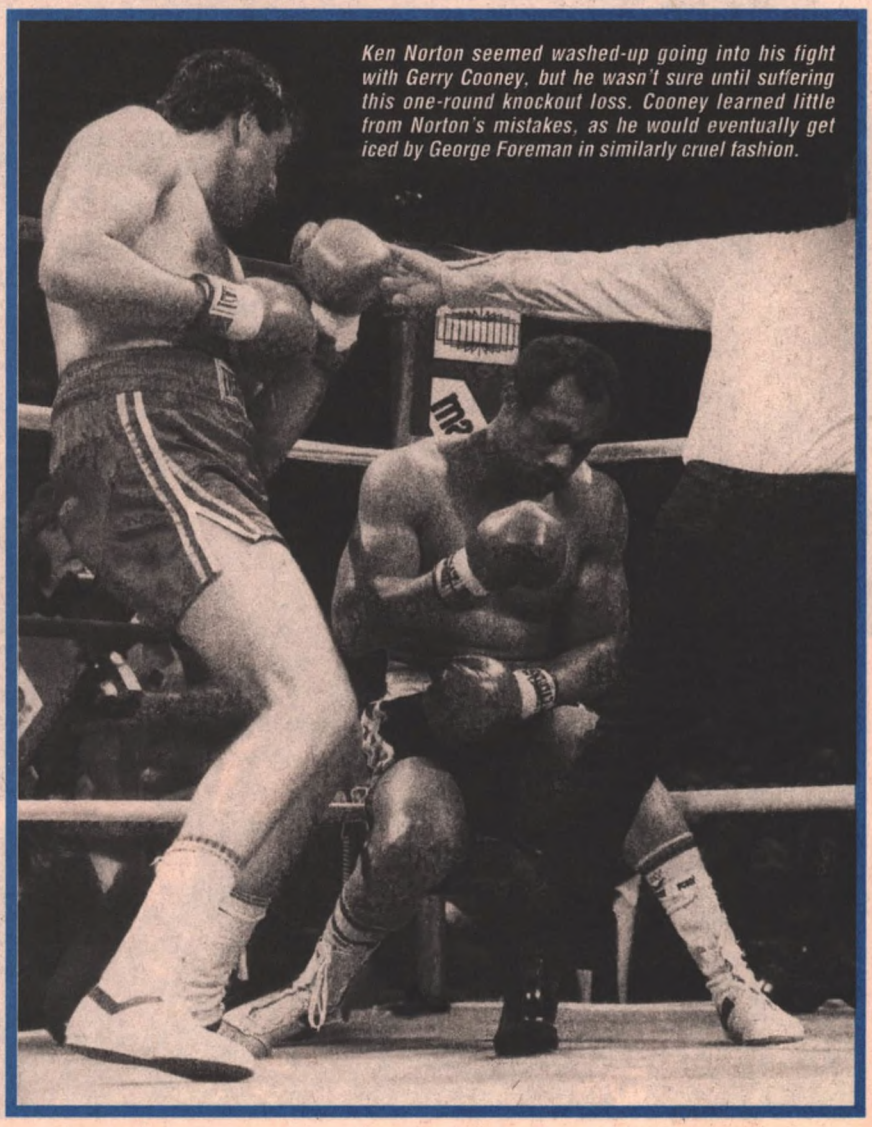
Ali wasn't the only heavyweight from that era who took one fight too many. His rival, Ken Norton, had his ups and downs after losing the WBC heavyweight title to

he can get himself into, might do it.

Yes, it's ridiculously dangerous for a tired, cranky old warhorse like Chavez to take on a young, fresh champion when the distinct possibility exists that he will be hurt. But don't think him a madman or even unusual for doing so anyway. Taking that one fight too many is what fighters do. They have to. Even the greatest among them.

It all would have been so perfect if Muhammad Ali had retired for good after whipping Leon Spinks in 1978 and regaining the heavyweight title. He'd beaten everyone there was to beat; between 1976 and '78 he'd survived his third fight with Ken Norton, survived the right-hand bombs of Earnie Shavers, somehow even survived Jimmy Young when the judges decided they liked an old, slow, soft legend more than a slippery kid who liked to stick his torso outside the ropes whenever the action inside got too intense. He got a couple of easy ones in there, too, playing around with hopelessly ordinary Europeans Richard Dunn and Alfredo Evangelista.

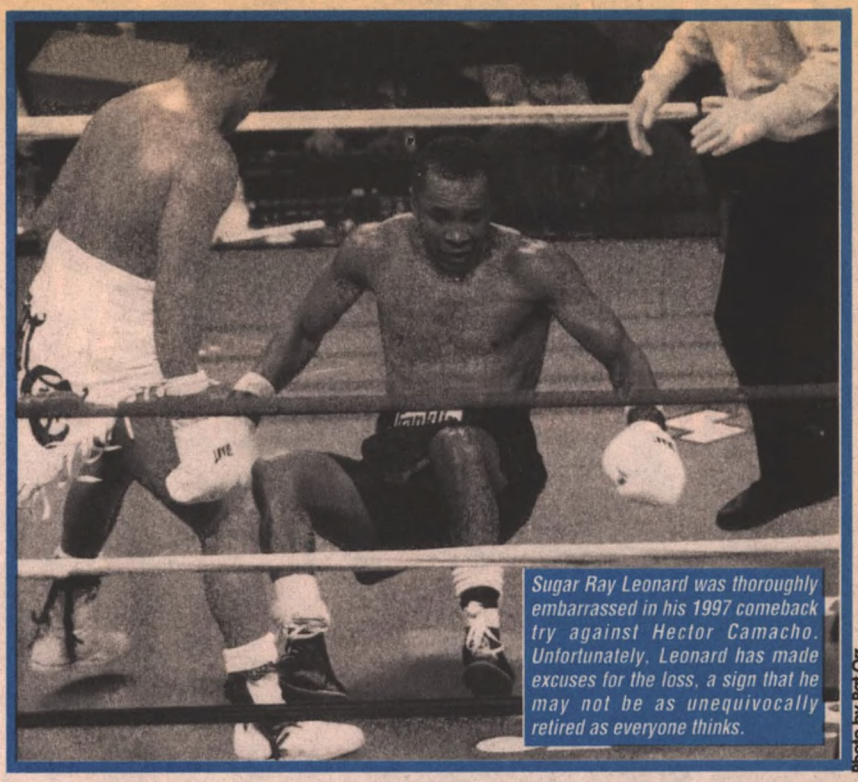
Then came the shocking loss to Spinks in the first match and the inevitable triumph in the return. "This is satisfying," he said then. "They all said I was finished, too old." With the possible exception of "The Thrilla In Manila," there wasn't a better fight on which to end his career. So he did. For two years.



Ken Norton seemed washed-up going into his fight with Gerry Cooney, but he wasn't sure until suffering this one-round knockout loss. Cooney learned little from Norton's mistakes, as he would eventually get iced by George Foreman in similarly cruel fashion.

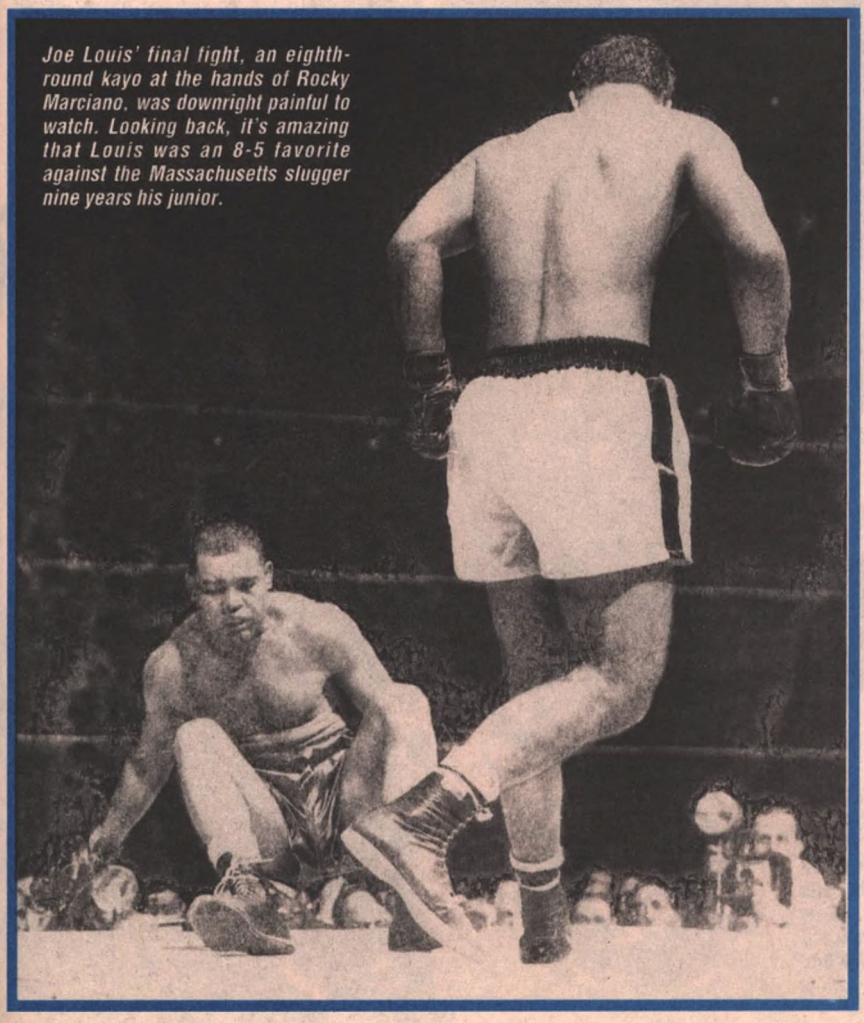
Holmes in '78 in one of the best heavyweight title fights ever. He stopped trial-horse Randy Stephens, then was starched in a round by Shavers in '79. Approaching 37 years old, he drew with journeyman Scott LeDoux and barely decisioned Tex Cobb. That would have been as good a time as any to call it a career. Neither LeDoux nor Cobb were world-class heavyweights, and it was obvious to everyone that Norton's time was up. But there was another big, white heavyweight out there he could make some money against and, in his mind, handle pretty easily.

Norton met Gerry Cooney in New York in May of '81. Early in the first round, he did all right, slipping Cooney's long jabs and burrowing inside. He even got the big guy against the ropes for a moment, which was probably the last thing he remembered. Showing unusual agility, Cooney spun Norton around and started unloading left hooks. Never one to hold up against a puncher, Norton froze. Cooney's hook landed again and again while Norton drooped, unconscious, on the ropes. Finally, it was stopped, and Norton, upon regaining his senses, needed no further convincing.



Sugar Ray Leonard was thoroughly embarrassed in his 1997 comeback try against Hector Camacho. Unfortunately, Leonard has made excuses for the loss, a sign that he may not be as unequivocally retired as everyone thinks.

Photo by Pat Orr



Joe Louis' final fight, an eighth-round kayo at the hands of Rocky Marciano, was downright painful to watch. Looking back, it's amazing that Louis was an 8-5 favorite against the Massachusetts slugger nine years his junior.

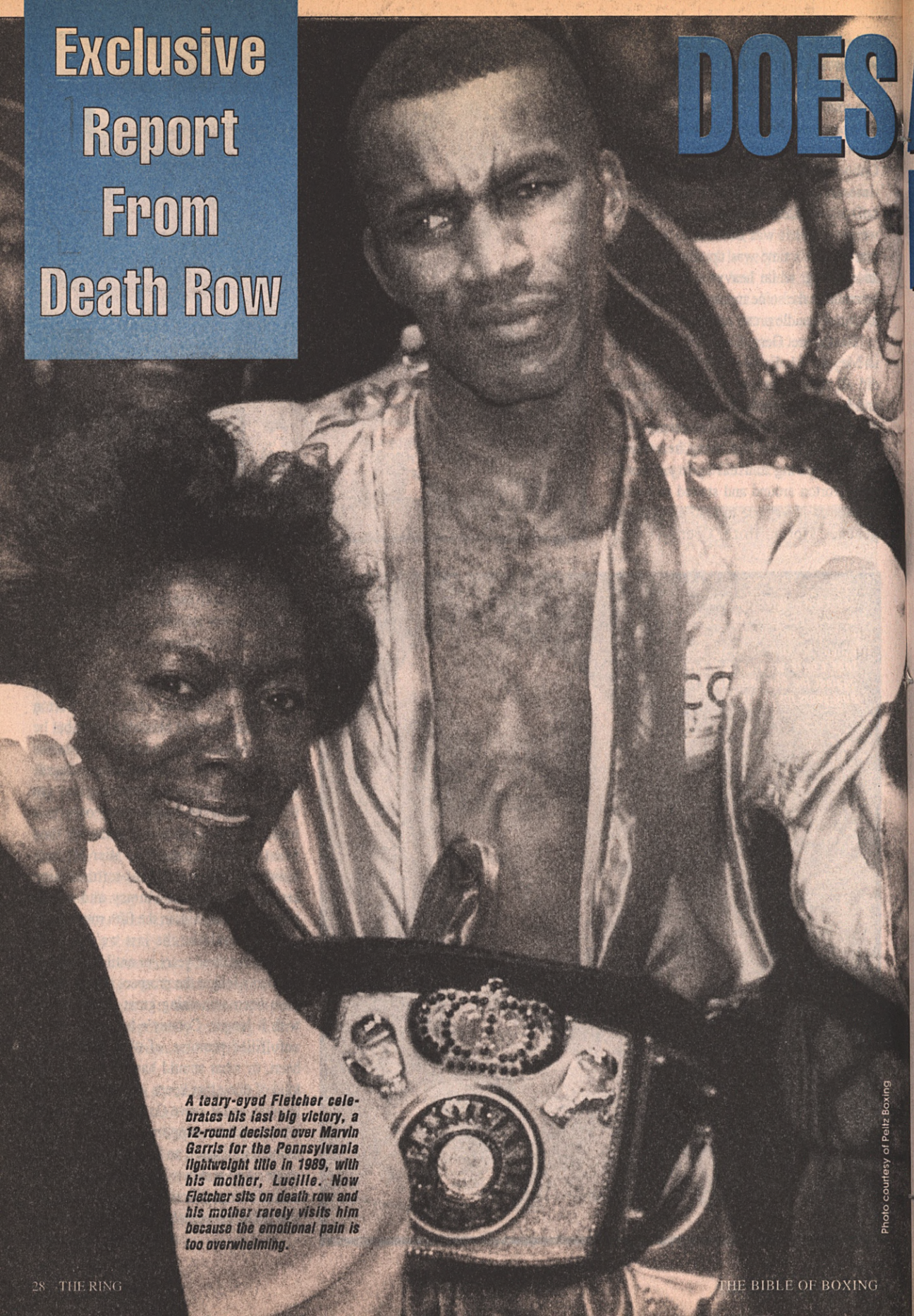
You would have thought Cooney would have taken the lessons learned by Norton and applied them in his own career, but he didn't. After losing to Larry Holmes for the title in 1982, Cooney floundered, trained, got injured, trained again, got injured, and even fought every once in a while. He got another shot at the big time when he met the much smaller Michael Spinks in '87, and Spinks tortured him, making him appear clumsy and oafish before stopping him in the fifth round.

That would be the last we'd hear of Cooney for three years, or until he couldn't stand any longer the prospect that he might have been something great if he'd stuck with it longer. Cooney's hell was one of unfulfilled promise, of what could have been, or what should have been. It's the kind of thing that keeps grown men awake at night, and it drove Cooney to call one of his staunchest supporters, Hall of Fame trainer Gil Clancy, to help him get back in shape. And it drove him to accept a fight with George Foreman, who was three years into his comeback and looking for a

(Continued on page 60)

Exclusive Report From Death Row

DOES ANTHONY FLETCHER DESERVE TO DIE?



A teary-eyed Fletcher celebrates his last big victory, a 12-round decision over Marvin Garris for the Pennsylvania lightweight title in 1989, with his mother, Lucille. Now Fletcher sits on death row and his mother rarely visits him because the emotional pain is too overwhelming.

Photo courtesy of Peltz Boxing

By Robert Cassidy

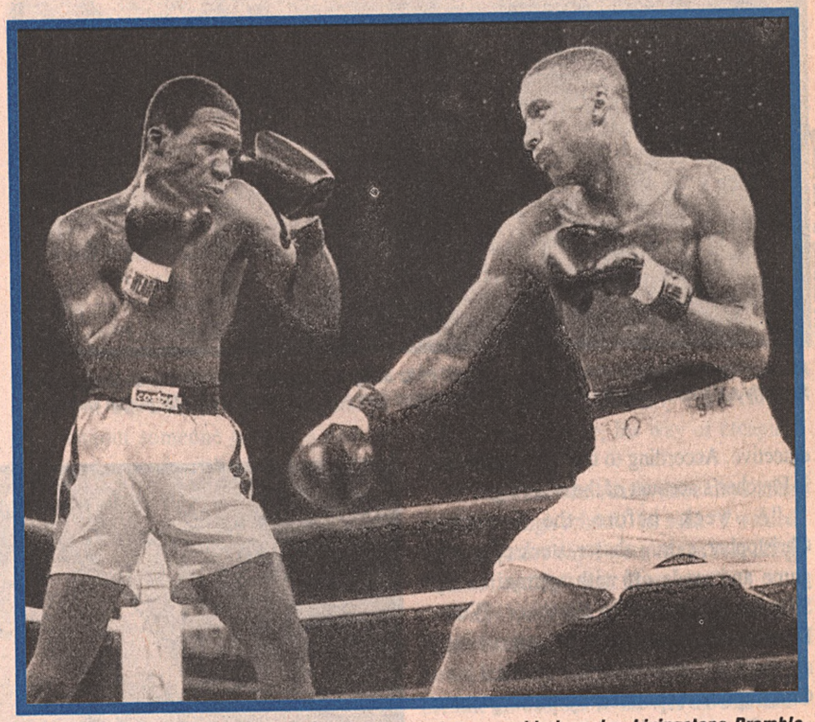
When former lightweight contender Anthony Fletcher looks back at his life, he realizes that the specter of death has always loomed over him. In his southwest Philadelphia neighborhood, a coffin was always just a stray bullet away. The streets were run by bullies and drug dealers, and as a teenager Fletcher hid from that lifestyle. His street battles were fought by his older brother and sometimes even by his mother.

Eventually, Fletcher became a boxer, did well, and came closer than most to fulfilling his dream of fighting for a world title. When boxing went sour, however, the old neighborhood was ready to reclaim him. But if there was no longer a future for him in boxing, there was even less of a future in southwest Philly. Fletcher quickly went from being a popular neighborhood fighter to one of 231 inmates currently sitting on Pennsylvania's death row. More than ever before, Fletcher is confronted with his own mortality. On death row, his only cellmate is the haunting imagery of execution. It stalks him every night.

"When guards come by my cell at night and shine the flashlight on me," he said, "I wake up and think they are coming to execute me."

On May 17, 1993, Anthony Fletcher was sentenced to die by lethal injection for the murder of Vaughn Christopher. The former fighter admitted that he'd never formed an opinion about capital punishment, but that changed when the jury came back with a guilty verdict.

"I don't believe in it under any circumstances," he said. "The politicians are forcing it down the public's throat. The death penalty is cruel."



Fletcher on his way to a 1981 decision win over future world champion Livingstone Bramble. Fletcher would later add another future champ, Freddie Pendleton, to his list of victims as well, but, slowed down by untimely physical ailments, would never receive a world title shot of his own.

Opponents of the death penalty argue that it is cruel and unusual punishment. Observers of Fletcher's trial say the way the proceedings unfolded were cruel and unusual.

"He was not tried fairly," said Lucille Fletcher, Anthony's mother. "It was chaos in that courtroom."

Although Fletcher has sharply criticized the performance of his trial lawyer, Stephen P. Patrizio, the attorney is, nonetheless, pained over his client's fate.

"It was not at all a fair trial," said Patrizio. "It was a real shame."

Over the course of three years, through letters to this writer, several phone interviews, and a person-to-person interview at the maximum security prison where Fletcher resides, the former fighter has insisted he was railroaded by a conspiracy that included the prosecutor, the judge, the coroner, and even his own attorney. It may sound like the desperate rant of a man trying to save his own life. But listen closer. Listen to the evidence Fletcher presents. Listen to a fighter who is still fighting.

Fletcher does not dispute he had an altercation with Christopher in the early morning hours of March 2, 1992. He does not dispute that Christopher, whom he knew from the neighborhood, was shot during that altercation. Fletcher provided THE RING with a signed transcript of his interview with a Philadelphia homicide

Photo courtesy of Peltz Boxing

Fletcher and his brother Frank flank J Russell Peltz at the promoter's 1982 Christmas party. Frank, formerly a top middleweight contender, is also behind bars now, serving 22 years for parole violation.

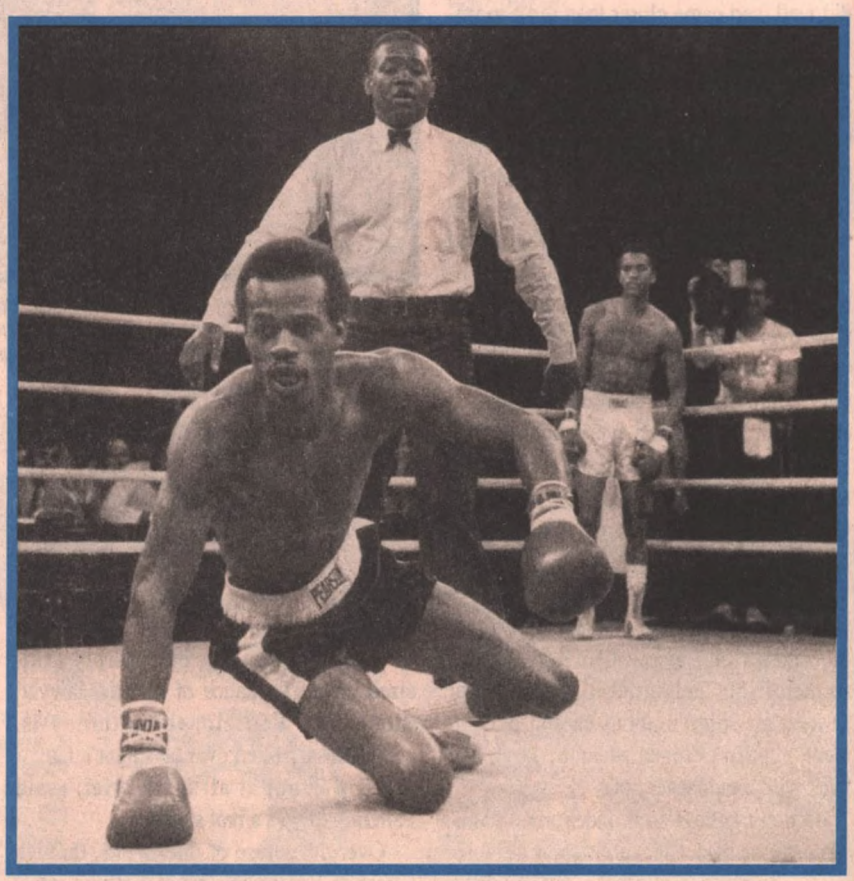
detective. According to that document, this is Fletcher's account of the shooting:

"A week before the incident, Christopher, a drug abuser, stuck up a crap game and made off with approximately $50 that belonged to Fletcher. When Fletcher saw him again, he immediately approached Christopher and punched him. Christopher responded by pulling out a gun. Fletcher rushed him, and the two struggled. During the course of the fight, the gun discharged twice. Christopher was shot in the leg and the side. Fletcher then walked away from the scene."

The Philadelphia police and the District Attorney's office tell a different tale than Fletcher. They insist that Fletcher, who had a previous arrest for drug possession, sought out Christopher and intentionally shot the victim because he owed him money for drugs. And while Fletcher and the authorities differ on the circumstances and motive for the shooting, the reason Christopher died 12½ hours after the shooting is a bit clearer. Where the blame should be assigned is open to debate.

In an attempt to establish his side of the story, Fletcher provided THE RING with an "analytical separation" of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania medical report (a step-by-step chart of what happened to Christopher after he was admitted), which in part reads: "He was making minimal amounts of urine and had an acceptable blood pressure on transfer up to the intensive care unit, but was still requiring transfusion of blood products to maintain this. Overall, his prognosis was poor and the patient's family was informed of this. This was around 6:20 a.m. ... thereafter, treatment was denied by the family ... because of the family's religious beliefs it was denied ... which resulted in his vital signs deteriorating badly at 1:00 p.m. because of the lack of blood to the vital organs."

On the medical examiner's pronouncement of death, the probable cause of death was listed as "exsanguination," a medical term for the draining or loss of blood. Fletcher and his family say that the victim's mother, a Jehovah's Witness, denied Christopher a blood transfusion because it contradicted with her religious beliefs. The gunshot wound sent Christopher to the hospital, but the lack of treatment could



Alex Byrd struggles to regain his feet in a 1984 second-round knockout loss to Fletcher in Atlantic City. The win moved "Two-Gun's" record to 18-0 (7).

well have contributed to his death.

Do such circumstances warrant capital punishment? Christopher did not die on the streets. He died in the hospital after a family member refused to authorize further treatment. When asked to comment on that, Marc F. Costanzo, who prosecuted the case for the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, replied: "I don't think that's accurate information ... There's no evidence of that, that I recall at trial."

That's because it was never presented at Fletcher's trial.

***

Sitting behind a glass partition, his hands and feet shackled, Anthony Fletcher smiled and said, "I was a lover, not a fighter."

He never expected to become a boxer. In fact, as a teenager he wasn't interested in the sport.

"I couldn't fight. Guys would take my money, my sneakers, my girls. When we were younger, my mother used to fight our battles for us. Then it was Frank who stuck up for me."

Boxing was always present in the Fletcher household. Lucille was an amateur boxing judge, and two of Anthony's uncles, Nate and Dick Turner, were pro fighters. It was unusual for a Christmas to pass without someone getting a pair of boxing gloves. Lucille, who raised six boys and two girls on her own, encouraged her sons to box. But Anthony's first choice was military service, his way of escaping violence.

Fletcher jars Frank Newton with a right hand en route to a disputed 10-round draw. Far worse than acquiring the first blemish on his record, however, was the fact that Fletcher came away with a detached retina that would keep him out of action for two years.

"I went into the Army three days after graduating high school," he said. "I wanted to go the same day I went to the recruiting station. I couldn't wait to get out."

While stationed in Germany, Fletcher began boxing. The sport that merely served as a backdrop to his childhood quickly became an obsession. He was an outstanding amateur, compiling a 159-12 record. In 1977, he won the National AAU title at 132 pounds. He beat future pro world champions Ray Mancini, Jimmy Paul, Harry Arroyo, Johnny Bumphus, and Milton McCrory.

"The first time I saw him was in the 1977 AAU championships," recalled Emanuel Steward. "He wore pink shorts, and I'll never forget that. He beat Dujuan Johnson. He knocked him down and he just outsmarted him. Anthony was very smart in the ring. He beat Darrell Chambers and he beat Jimmy Paul. He beat all the Kronk fighters in the amateurs, so that should tell you what kind of potential he had."

In 1980, Fletcher started appearing on the undercards of his older brother Frank,

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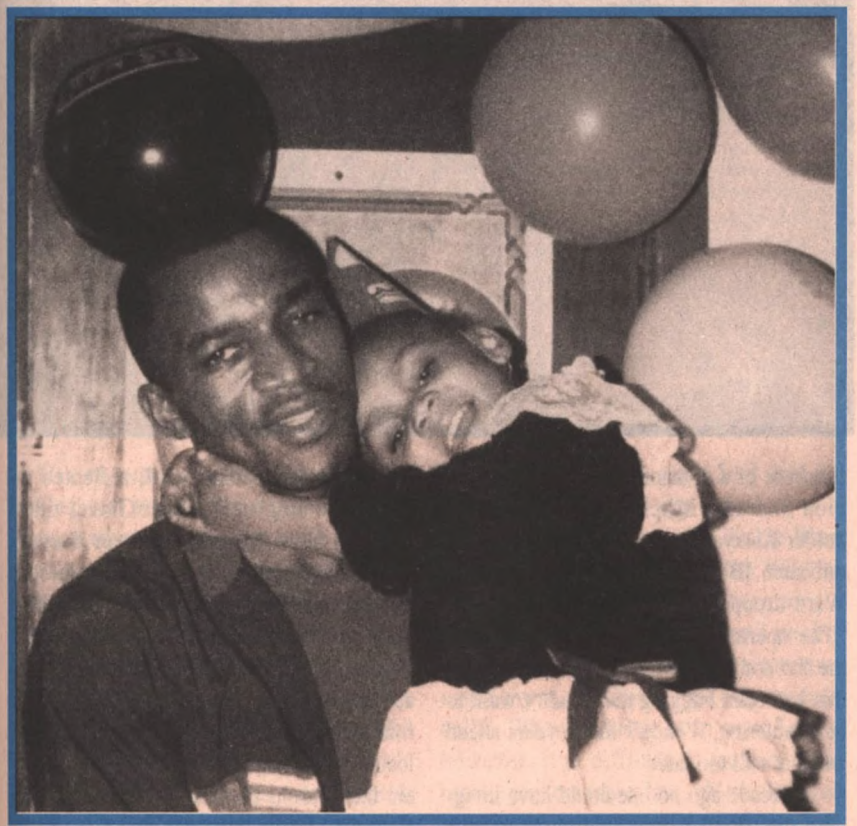


Fletcher shares a tender moment with daughter Antoina, one of his six children, not long before he went to prison. Antoina's older brother, Anthony Jr., works tirelessly in an effort to see his father exonerated.

Steamrolling The Road To Glory!

THE RESURRECTION OF MICKY WARD

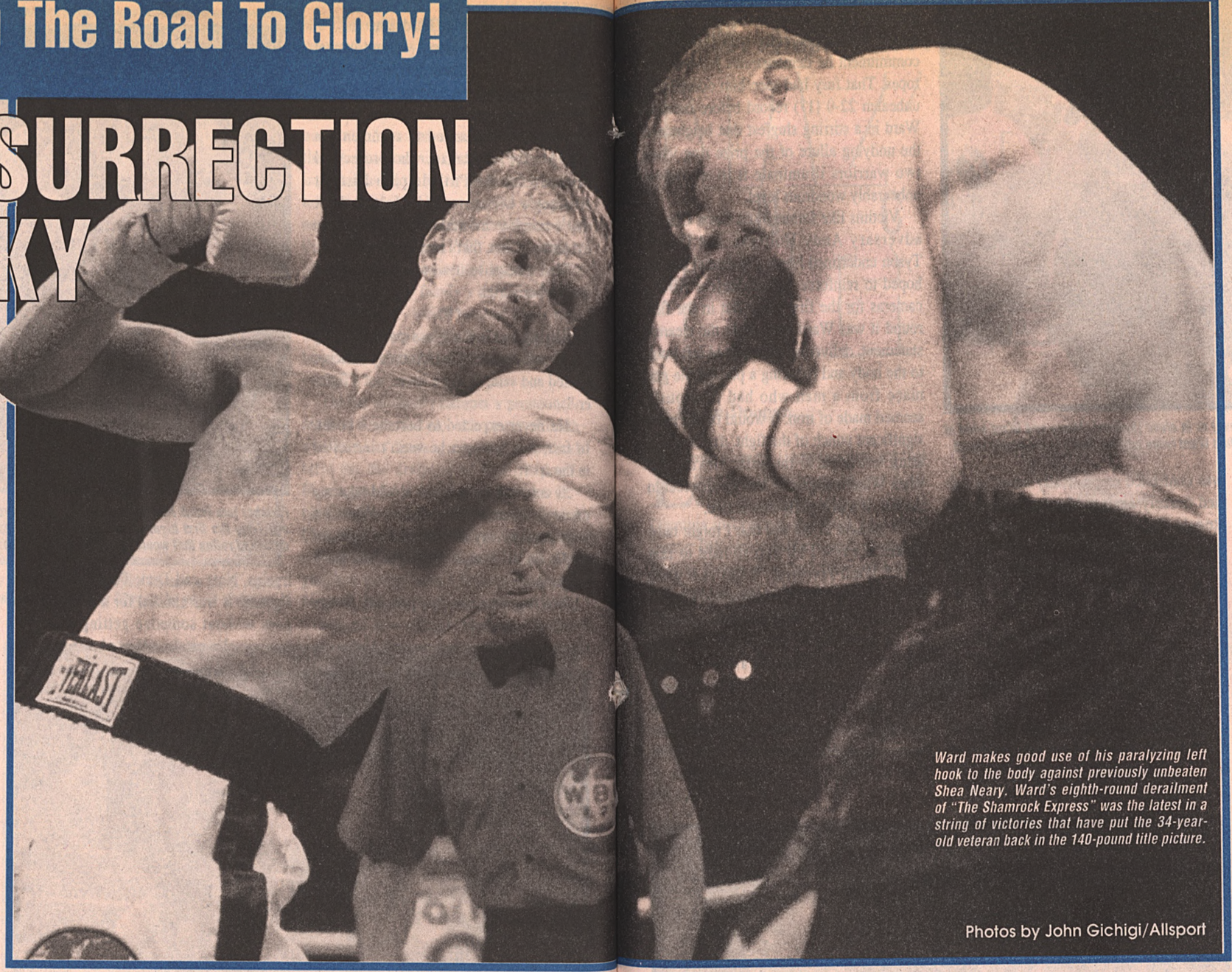
By Brian Doogan

Micky Ward relishes every day he has the chance to exploit a talent he figured would be denied him, ironically, because of fragile hands. The very implements that empower him to demonstrate his essence let him down. Their weakness betrayed an inner steel forged in Irish-American surroundings in Lowell, Massachusetts, and proven through countless wars with the best 140-pounders in boxing. Life, they say, ain't meant to be fair, and Ward's appreciation of this old truism must have been acute.

Fortunately, he never let this realization invade any other area of his body or mind. Inside he remained strong. Three years of enforced inactivity between 1991 and 1994 ended abruptly when the 34-year-old vowed to himself that he would not be haunted in later years by that corrosive old poser, *What if?* While he still had it within him, he needed to find out. The expertise of a Dr. Morgles of the Lahey Clinic in Burlington, Massachusetts, made it possible.

"He removed some bone from my pelvis and fused it into my right hand, which had caused me the most trouble," Ward recalled in the wake of an explosive eighth-round triumph over the formidable Irish junior welterweight, Shea Neary, on the Naseem Hamed-Vuyani Bungu undercard at Olympia in London that vindicated completely his return to the ring. The victory catapulted him improbably to the forefront of a division led by WBA champion Sharmba Mitchell and WBC titleholder Kostya Tszyu and underpinned by unbeaten IBF titlist Zab Judah, to whom Ward dropped a decision two years ago. "The operation was successful and gave me the confidence to put right everything that had been bugging me. I didn't want to be wondering, *What if?* in the years ahead when it's all too late."

A decade ago no one could have imagined that Ward would ever have made it back to the world-class level anyway. A solid amateur background, reflected in three New England Golden Gloves titles and two New England Amateur Boxing Federation crowns, preceded a successful initiation to the professional game. But after 14 straight wins, he began to succumb to the psychological demons that accompanied the erosion of his hands and four straight defeats in a debilitating 3-6 losing stretch against top-class practitioners like Harold Brazier and Charles "The Natural" Murray that prompted his sabbatical.



Ward makes good use of his paralyzing left hook to the body against previously unbeaten Shea Neary. Ward's eighth-round derailment of "The Shamrock Express" was the latest in a string of victories that have put the 34-year-old veteran back in the 140-pound title picture.

Photos by John Gichigi/Allsport

"I was getting tired of everything. Boxing just wasn't fun anymore," said Ward, contented once more in his life and moving soon to a more comfortable home in Lowell with girlfriend Charlene and 10-year-old daughter Kasie. "I was getting thrown in back-to-back with the top guys of the world, all the iron, and four defeats in succession will hurt any guy's confidence. I had no self-esteem. It's difficult when you don't have some wins to pick yourself up while your confidence is down. To me, it seemed like I just kept on fighting tough, tough guys. So I thought, *To hell with this*, and I was done."

For almost two years, the likable Ward worked as a prison guard at the Billerica House of Correction before becoming a steamroller operator for a road paving company with whom he retains part-time employment. He trained, but only sporadically. When fighting is in your bones, however, it is difficult to make a clean break, particularly when, physically, you remain in your prime. Ask Sugar Ray Leonard, also stricken by injury, the detached retina in his left eye caused probably by the devastating right hands of Tommy Hearns in that herculean welterweight war in 1981. The competitive urge, that burning desire, became irresistible, and comeback followed comeback followed comeback. Ward could empathize. He had good reason to have Leonard on his mind.

On July 18, 1978, Ward's trainer and half-brother, Dick Ecklund, lost a 10-round decision to the 1976 Olympic gold medalist and future star from Palmer Park, Maryland. It was the highlight of Ecklund's career. Soon, he too would fall prey to demons far more sinister than Micky would ever experience. Crack cocaine, not cracks in the hands, proved his nemesis, and if Ward's woes were real enough, Dickie's were life-threatening.

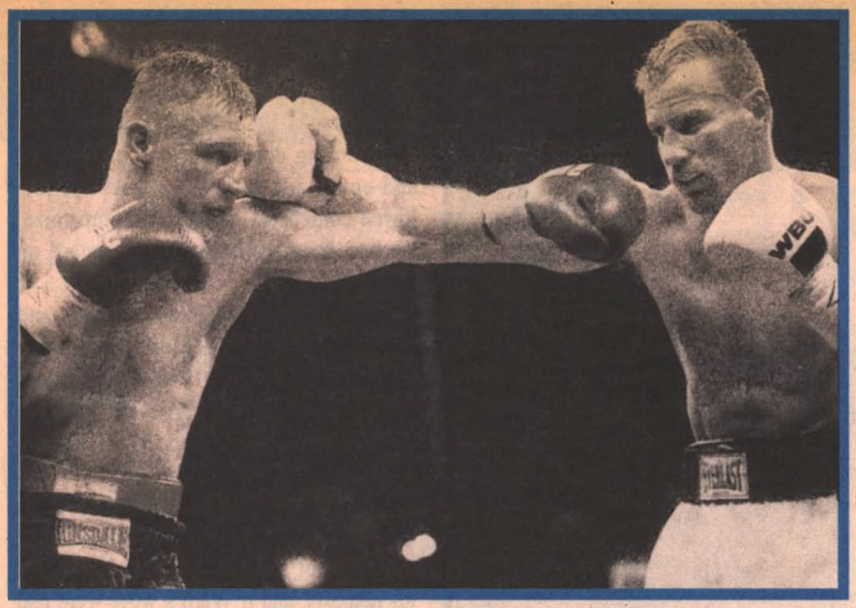
In 1996, Ecklund told THE RING, "I was down to about 120 pounds at the end. Anybody could have pushed me over. I remember being able to take my hand and wrap it around my entire upper arm and still have room left over. People used to come to the crack houses and be told I was Dick Ecklund, the guy that fought Sugar Ray Leonard. Everybody laughed because they couldn't believe it. There was nothing left of me."

Ward never laughed. Growing up, Ecklund was his idol, which is why he became a fighter, to follow in the footsteps of a guy who, in his eyes, could do no wrong. Now, here he was throwing away his life. And Ward was helpless. Ecklund, you see, was not able to see reason.

"He was like a walking skeleton. I thought he was going to die," Ward related, the pain still evident in his soft voice. "I always looked up to my brother. That's why it hurt so much. I could do nothing. When you're in that situation, the last thing you do is hear advice. He was slipping. At any time I thought I would get the call that he was a goner. Half the time I couldn't find him. The other half was like he wasn't there anyway.

"He got arrested in the end and was put away. In jail he was confronted by two choices: Do nothing or do something. He tried to straighten out. You see, you have to do it yourself. Others can't do it for you. He had to face this reality and, thank God, he did."

Maybe Ward's ring return provided



No matter whether they fought on the outside (above) or in close (bottom), Neary and Ward went at each other non-stop. The thrilling slugfest ended when Ward twice toppled Neary in the eighth round.

inspiration. He compiled eight straight wins in the first couple of years of his comeback that included a minor upset of then-unbeaten Providence favorite Lewis Veader. His biggest test, however, came on the Oscar De La Hoya-Pernell Whitaker undercard on April 12, 1997, when he was matched against Mexican knockout artist Alfonso Sanchez. After being floored and pretty much decimated for six rounds, Ward landed a hard left hook to the liver, ironically the favored blow of Mexican fighters. Sanchez collapsed. The count was a formality. Victory not only restored Ward's confidence, but also earned him a title shot against "Cool" Vince Phillips, then the IBF junior welterweight champion. Fate dealt Ward another cruel blow, however, when he sustained a deep cut in the third round and was stopped. But it would not stop him altogether.

"The Sanchez fight told me that I could come back from anything, being knocked down, being stopped, or being so far behind that I might be out of sight," Ward insisted. "It told me that I could get in there with the best in the world and, even though things did not go as I had planned against Phillips, I still believed that. I just didn't know if I'd get another shot at the big time."

Another defeat, to the unbeaten Judah, was eased by the knowledge that he had given the emerging young force one of his toughest formative experiences. Toughness had become a byword for Ward, and that was confirmed emphatically when he rallied fiercely against Maryland contender Reggie Green to stop him dramatically with only 20 seconds left in the 10th and final round of one of the best fights of 1999. On two of the three judges' scorecards he was behind.

"I was losing the battles maybe, but not the war," Ward declared defiantly. "He hurt me a few times, but I never gave up the faith."

He carried it all the way into the ring in London, the first overseas assignment of Ward's career, against the unbeaten Liverpool-based Neary, "The Shamrock Express" whose engaging and modest nature contrasts vividly with the furious commitment he demonstrates between the ropes. That fury had seen him compile an unbeaten 22-0 (17) record before meeting Ward in a stirring slugfest that heightened the undying allure of the prize ring when two warriors illuminate it to an almost unbearably wondrous level.

Victims like former Julio Cesar Chavez adversary Andy Holligan and Darryl Tyson underlined Neary's potential that he hoped to reinforce fighting before HBO's cameras for the first time. But in the first round it was Ward who made the clearest statement, delivering his vaunted left hook to the body and inducing a perceptible grimace from a man who had previously seemed made of iron. It would be the most significant punch of the fight, that excruciating left hook to the solar plexus, and when Ward realigned it into an uppercut to the jaw, it was equally destructive.

"I thought in the end that I might have broken his ribs I hit him so hard to that area," Ward revealed. "I felt real good from the get-go and just outgunned him."

The fight was waged at close quarters for all eight rounds, and Neary's punches were never negligible. To avoid the right hand bodypunches to his left ribcage, Ward, 35-9 (26), switched momentarily to southpaw, and got caught by a right to the temple that left him shaken. Experience came to Ward's aid, and he evaded most of

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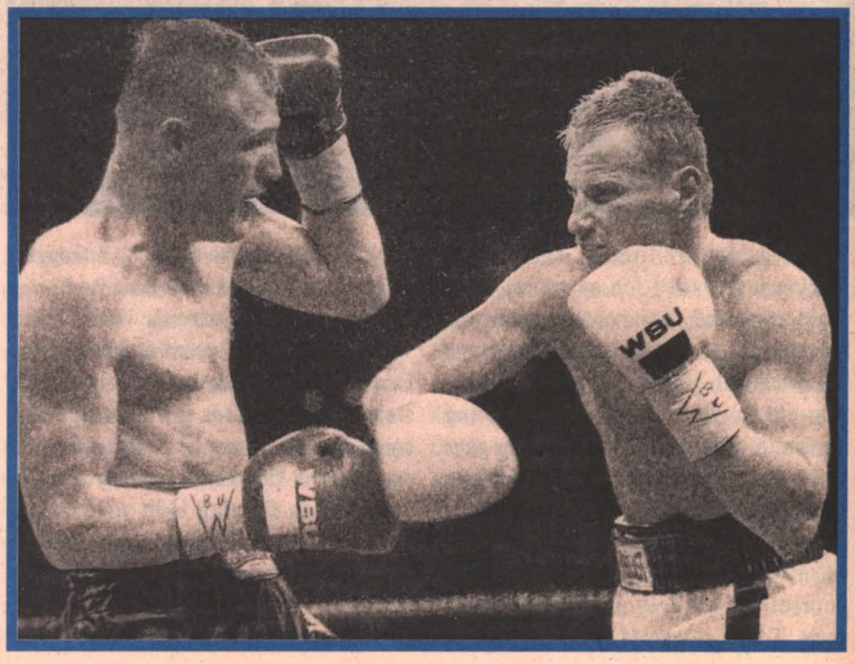


Morales... Barrera... Mayweather... Corrales... Norwood... Tapia

NAZ' BIG TALK INCLUDES BIG NAMES

By Brian Doogan

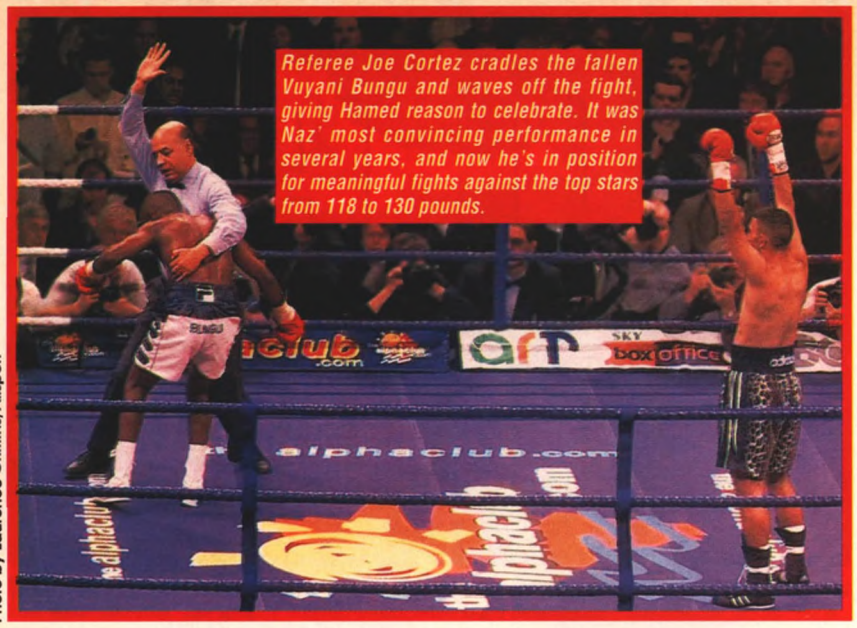
Even Naseem Hamed recognized that the need for redemption was acute when he stepped into the ring at Olympia in London on March 11 against former IBF junior featherweight champion Vuyani Bungu. His three previous outings had resulted in his stock plunging so alarmingly that insiders were speculating on his imminent removal from the market for serious malpractice, in the form of fraudulent use of a trademark name.

Against Wayne McCullough in Atlantic City on Halloween night 1998, Hamed resembled a chastened child being told to take his trick or treating someplace else. The tough Irishman was characteristically in no mood for games. Six months later, the world's foremost and best-paid featherweight appeared again to have been replaced by an impostor when brought to the brink of disaster as he ran completely out of steam against Paul Ingle, only his prodigious power preventing what may incredibly have become a stoppage defeat. And against Cesar Soto last October ... well, some incidents in life are best forgotten. Men have joined the French Foreign Legion for a whole lot less.

That was the baggage Hamed brought with him as he somersaulted over the ropes in a typically look-at-me manner to encounter a man unbeaten in eight years, including 14 world title fights, but inactive for 13 months and stepping up for the first time from junior featherweight. If there was a suspicion of terminal erosion, recent performances inevitably inviting such a stark conclusion, it was quickly expelled.

"I don't feel pressure. I don't smell pressure," insisted Hamed, 34-0 (30), after dispatching a surprisingly fear-ravaged, impotent, and overwhelmed Bungu with a perfectly executed straight left to the jaw in the fourth round. "I could carry the world on my shoulders and, believe me, nothing would be wrong. I am in the hands of Allah, and there ain't nothing going wrong with my career.

"I'm prepared to meet the best and beat the best. Erik Morales, Marco Antonio Barrera, Floyd Mayweather, bring them all on. I would love to fight all of those guys."



Referee Joe Cortez cradles the fallen Vuyani Bungu and waves off the fight, giving Hamed reason to celebrate. It was Naz' most convincing performance in several years, and now he's in position for meaningful fights against the top stars from 118 to 130 pounds.

Photo by Laurence Griffiths/Allsport

THE RING has taken Hamed at his word and dusted off the old crystal ball to predict what might happen against six fighters with more compelling credentials than Bungu, men who can seriously test Hamed's desire and ability to walk in the hallowed footsteps of Muhammad Ali—a journey he has always insisted is his life's mission. Ali's claims to being The Greatest were vindicated over 15 years at the pinnacle of heavyweight boxing. For Hamed, there are still many hills to climb. Together, they constitute the equivalent of scaling Everest.

JOHNNY TAPIA

It took a fight and fighter that THE RING designated last year's Fight of the Year and Fighter of the Year, respectively, to acquaint 32-year-old Tapia with the first loss of his astonishing 12-year career. For 12 rounds, he and Paulie Ayala warred ferociously for the WBA bantamweight title, respite limited solely to the one-minute interval between rounds.

Drug-induced problems that led to a period of incarceration in the early-1990s have failed to subsume a talent Tapia has subsequently worked passionately to exploit. He rebounded from the potentially crushing loss to Ayala by decisioning Jorge Eliecer Julio with a display hailed as the finest he has produced in his hometown of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Strengths: A solid chin and dogged determination underpins a high energy level most constructively manifested in combination counterpunching, at which he excels. Also a savvy defensive boxer when the mood strikes.

Weaknesses: His lack of one-punch power would be accentuated at featherweight, and his susceptibility to emotional impulses can be to the detriment of his judgment and skills.

Prediction: Hamed's power in a slugfest would be decisive, and Tapia, to stand a chance, would need to get inside and exert constant pressure. Faced with an opponent he knows can do him no damage fortifies Hamed to the point of imperious domination. For all his fighting ability and unquestionable heart, Tapia, 47-1-2 (25), would be outgunned and would fail to last beyond the middle rounds.

Bottom Line: Hamed KO 6

FREDDIE NORWOOD

Norwood is unlikely to have been much impressed by Hamed's destruction of Bungu, as the WBA featherweight champion—who claimed the vacant belt by decisioning Antonio Cermeno in April 1998 after Wilfredo Vazquez vacated to challenge Hamed and was dismantled in seven rounds—also boasts a win over the South African. Norwood, 30, did have to go the eight-round distance, but that was in Italy in '92 when Bungu was approaching his peak.

Nicknamed "Li'l Hagler," but hardly imbued with the dedication of Marvelous Marvin, never mind anything else, Norwood let personal problems get the better of him in '98 and briefly landed himself in a California jail. A month later, he scaled a pound-and-a-half over the 126-pound limit before stopping Koji Matsumoto in the 10th round in Japan and was promptly stripped of the title. He won it back against Cermeno last year, but ringside observer Gil Clancy declared, "I told Norwood's promoter [Bob Arum] they should put him on a boat, take him out to sea, and leave him there. That was as bad a

Johnny Tapia slips a left from Jorge Eliecer Julio and scores with a hard left hand of his own. Tapia has the skill to trouble Hamed, but his lack of punching power might prove a crucial disadvantage.

title fight as I've ever seen."

Strengths: When Norwood utilizes it properly, he has an effective jab, and his southpaw stance can prove problematical. He boasts a reasonably sound chin and a solid punch.

Weaknesses: His focus in and out of the ring is questionable and a dubious lifestyle may rob him of the talent he has.

Prediction: If his second encounter with Cermeno and subsequent defense against Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez are anything to go by, Norwood, 36-0-1 (21), may try to drag Hamed into another spoiling match—and we definitely don't want to see that. Hamed won't either and would strive to release himself from Norwood's octopus-like clutches to deliver shots that will test Li'l Hagler's jaw.

Bottom Line: Hamed KO 8

Diego Corrales has a bloody Roberto Garcia ready to go in the fight in which he won the IBF junior lightweight title. "Chico's" remarkable height and power have propelled him to 31 straight wins, but his tendency toward mental lapses could get him into trouble against Hamed.

DIEGO CORRALES

Undefeated and a freakish six-feet tall, IBF junior lightweight titleholder "Chico" Corrales confidently sees himself surpassing Floyd Mayweather as the 130-pound division's standard-bearer. A convincing knockout of Roberto Garcia to win the title last October, a one-sided first defense against the usually combative John Brown in December, and an impressive third-round TKO of Derrick "Smoke" Gainer in March have solidified the rapidly emerging 22-year-old's burgeoning reputation.

"I know Floyd's a great fighter, and I wouldn't take him lightly, but I do believe I have what it takes to beat him," Corrales recently told THE RING. "I don't think anyone's ever tested his chin like I will. There are times I'm going to have to take shots to give shots, but I'm willing to do that."

Strengths: His height and reach are formidable enough obstacles, but Corrales also has good power, especially in his left hook, and is tough and durable.

Weaknesses: Brown inflicted a cut under his right eye in round six and Corrales seemed to lose confidence before recovering his poise to lift a unanimous decision. Has not yet mixed at the highest level.

Prediction: Corrales, 31-0 (25), would look to make his physical advantages count against the 5'3" Hamed. But he could ill-afford the lapses in concentration to which he is prone. A concerted body attack, instrumental in Bungu's downfall, would be vital to Hamed's success. With patience and timing, those horrid, wild lunges being kept to a minimum, Hamed could lay traps that his disabling power-punches would take advantage of.

Bottom Line: Hamed KO 10

Photo byAnthony Neste/HBO

Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales stand and trade in a familiar scene from their epic battle. Morales got the decision, but Barrera seemed to most the stronger man that night, and it's hard to say who would have the better chance of defeating The Prince.

MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA

The Mexican resurrected his reputation and career in a breathtakingly compelling struggle with Erik Morales in February, and the two official judges who scored against him after 12 furiously fought rounds were overwhelmingly in the minority. The heir apparent to Julio Cesar Chavez before a shocking stoppage loss to New Yorker Junior Jones and subsequent points defeat, 26-year-old Barrera fought with a beautiful, furious zeal to negate the physical advantages of his favored compatriot and thrust himself forward as a genuine threat to Hamed.

A potential obstacle is his apparent

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The Golden Road To Stardom

Eleventh In A Series

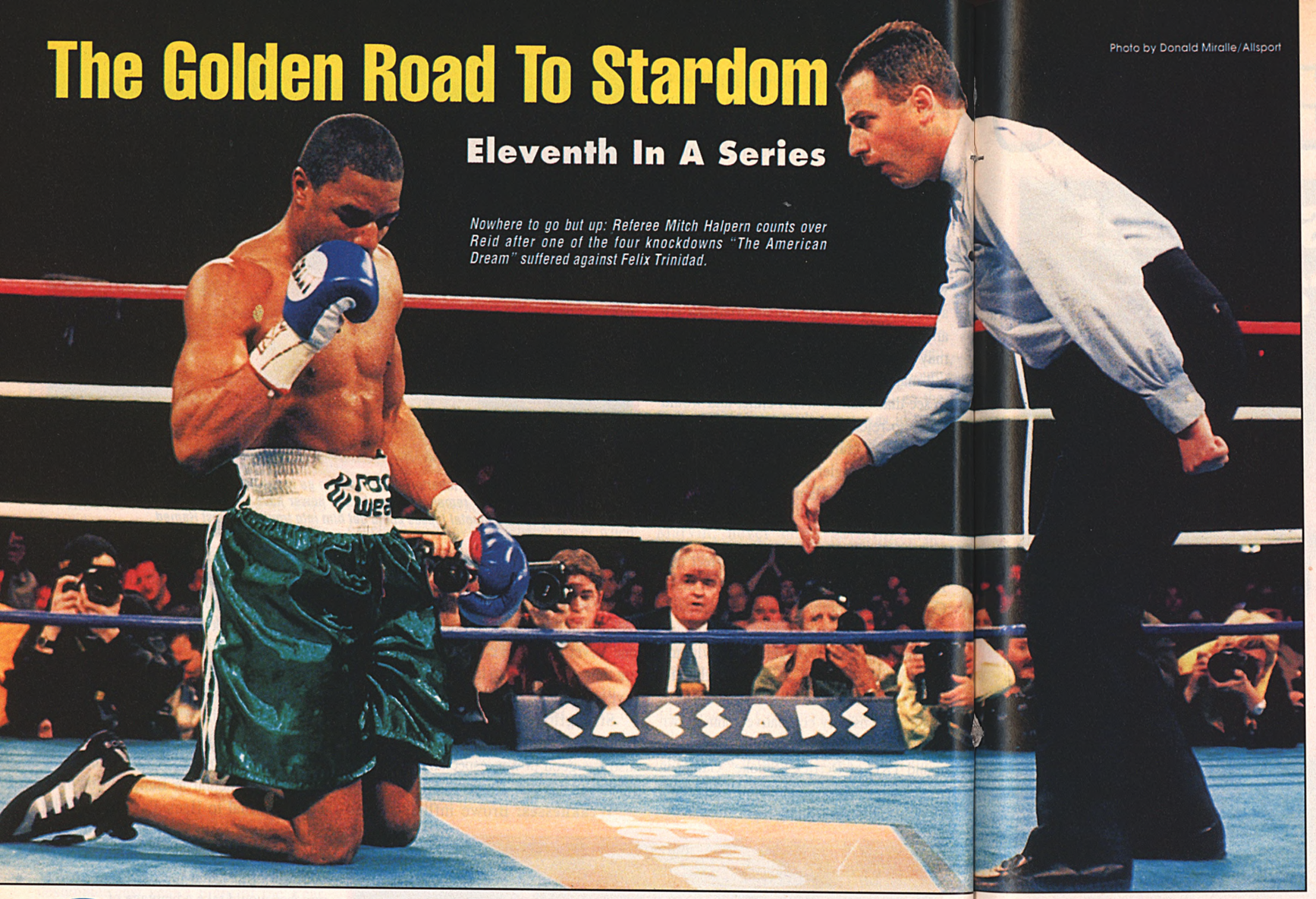

Photo by Donald Miralle/Allsport

Nowhere to go but up: Referee Mitch Halpern counts over Reid after one of the four knockdowns "The American Dream" suffered against Felix Trinidad.

CAN DAVID REID DEAL WITH DEFEAT?

By Nigel Collins

Two weeks after his loss to Felix Trinidad, the smile had returned to David Reid's face, but the hurt lingered in his voice, an emotional pain that will last a lot longer than the cuts and bruises Trinidad inflicted with his fists. Nonetheless, although Reid's WBA super welterweight title and undefeated record are both gone, the belief in himself that carried him to a gold medal at the 1996 Olympics and to 14 straight victories as a pro is still intact.

When he was a boy fighting his way toward an eventual Olympic berth, Reid was a notoriously poor loser, the sort who threw tantrums and trophies before slinking away to sulk. Sometimes he didn't return to the gym for weeks. Things are different today; Reid has matured as both a person and a fighter. Okay, so he backed his car into a mailbox shortly after returning home from Las Vegas, but that probably had as much to do with his driving skills as it did any post-defeat funk. In fact, Reid seemed eager to talk about his ordeal, and as the words spilled out, you sensed he was experiencing some sort of catharsis.

"I got beat, but that did not mess up my ability to box," said Reid as he sat on the couch of his Marlton, New Jersey, condo, the nine-stitch cut on his right eyelid now a thin, almost imperceptible scar. "And it didn't mess me up as far as saying, 'I'm gonna lose to this guy; I'm gonna lose to that guy.' I still have my will to box. That's what I am, a fighter. I just have to put in the time and work to come back, and

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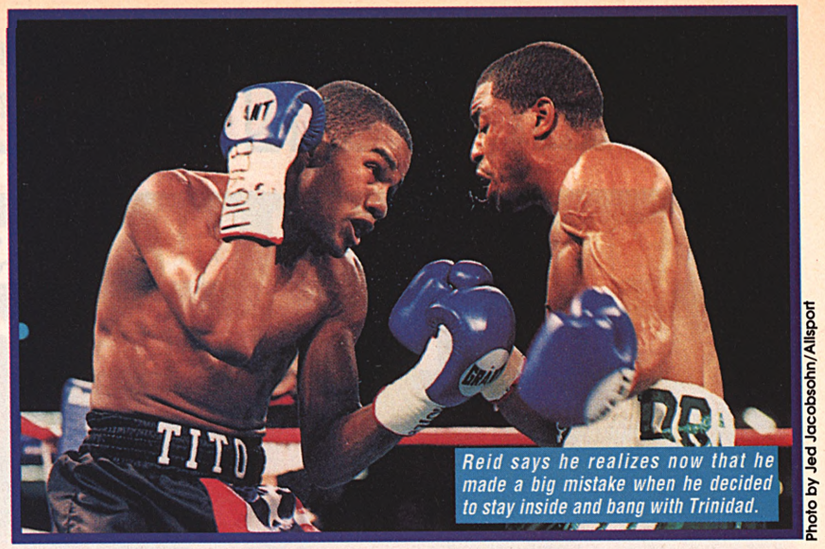
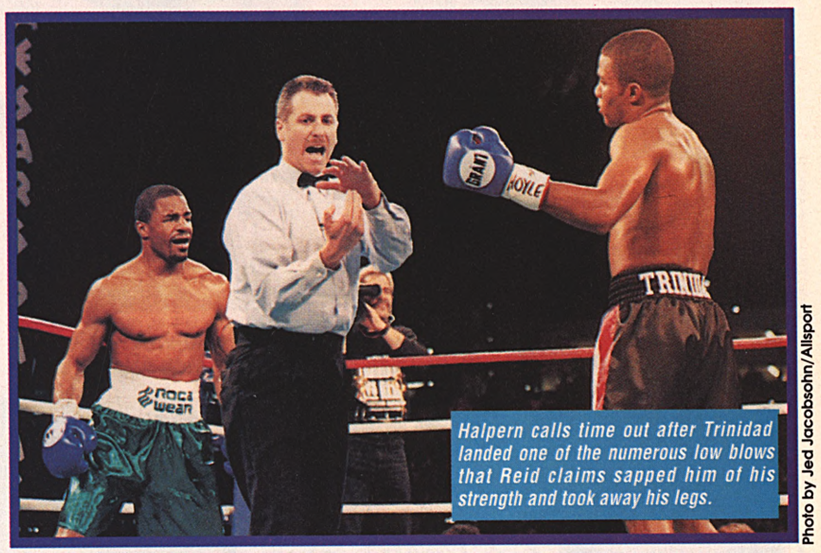


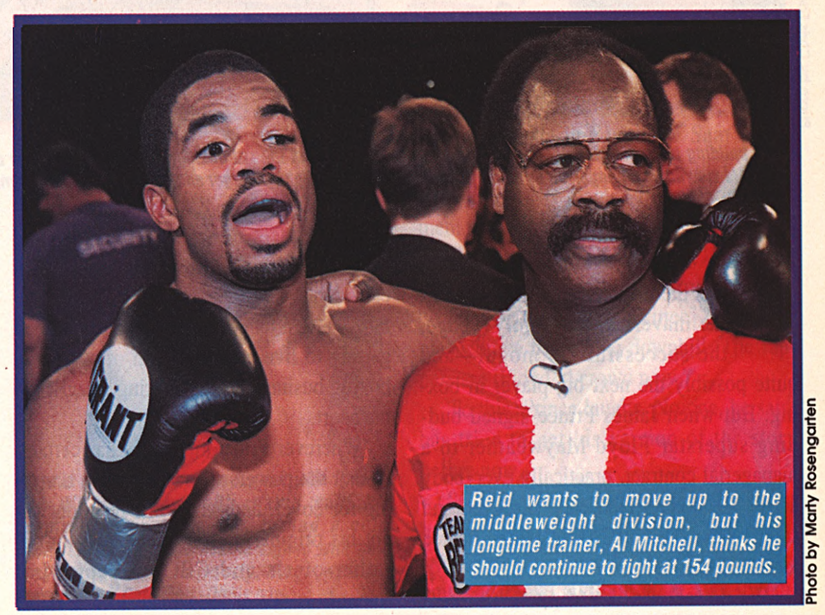
Reid says he realizes now that he made a big mistake when he decided to stay inside and bang with Trinidad.

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport



Halpern calls time out after Trinidad landed one of the numerous low blows that Reid claims sapped him of his strength and took away his legs.

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport



Reid wants to move up to the middleweight division, but his longtime trainer, Al Mitchell, thinks he should continue to fight at 154 pounds.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

THE PRINCE WHO WOULD BE KING

Rap Mogul Wants To Set The Record Straight

Photo by Chris Farina

After building his rap business, James Prince turned his interest toward boxing. He was an unknown until he signed young superstar Floyd Mayweather. Prince is viewed as a hanger-on by some, though the neophyte fight manager said he is just a businessman looking out for the best interest of his clients.

By Joe Santoliquito

He is the mystery man, the intruder, the maverick, the family wedge, the successful rap mogul—and quite possibly the next big player in boxing. But when James Prince signed budding superstar Floyd Mayweather to a managerial contract, practically everybody across the boxing landscape shrugged and said, "Who the hell is this James Prince guy?"

His detractors like to paint him as a parasite, intent on sucking the life—and money—out of the rising number of world champions he is collecting. Prince maintains he is nothing more than a fan who is getting to live out his dream of running a boxing business that will bring integrity to the sport.

Wherever Prince fits in, he has certainly sent the powers who run boxing scurrying for cover, and while this reaction was not his original objective, the 34-year-old father of six and CEO of Rap-A-Lot Records is not exactly distressed that his emergence is shaking up the old guard. And Prince isn't finished yet. Not long after he secured WBC super featherweight champ Mayweather, he inked another rising star in WBA welterweight titlist James Page. As of press time, it appeared imminent that the Houston, Texas, native would sign Mike Tyson, further strengthening Prince's position.

But after earning millions and establishing himself in the rap industry, why this, why boxing, why the unnecessary aggravation?

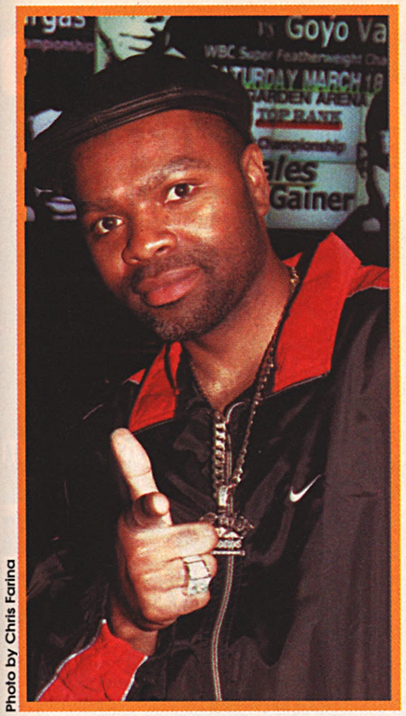


Photo by Chris Farina

By signing WBC super featherweight champ Mayweather and getting WBA welterweight champ James Page's name on a managerial contract, Prince is becoming a powerbroker in boxing. As of press time, the Houston native was rumored to be attempting to sign Mike Tyson.

Photo by Frank Vilucci

Prince first met Mayweather in 1996, then was reacquainted with the young champion through Tyson in '99 at the Golden Gloves Gym in Las Vegas. From there, Mayweather and Prince have built a bond.

"I have a passion for boxing; it's a part of me," Prince told THE RING in the first in-depth interview he's granted the boxing media. "I feel like I'm on a mission to bring dignity to a sport that I feel is the most exciting sport in the world. I'm a successful businessman and I'm used to a formula of success. You can't be scared to take chances, and that's what I did when I plunged into boxing.

"I don't know if I see myself as a threat to the people who run boxing, but I think they see me as a threat. I'm actually a threat to those who try to mistreat my fighters. I hope I can eventually work with everybody. But I sense the vibe some people want to run me off, that they don't want to work with me. By no means would I come into boxing thinking there wouldn't be trials and tribulations. This is something I've been molded for through my dealings with music. The punches and things being thrown my way are rolling right off."

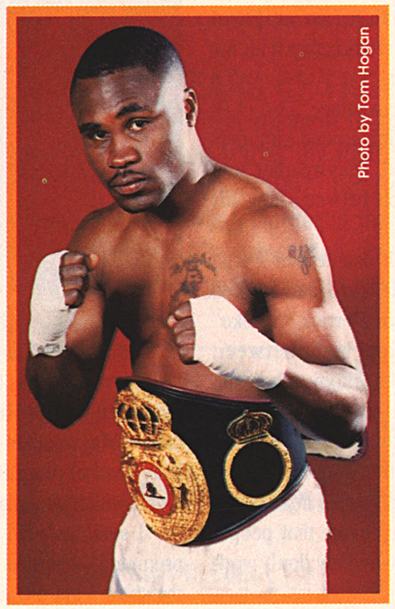


Photo by Tom Hogan

Page is certainly happy he signed with Prince. The WBA welterweight champ said his promoter, Don King, has turned a cold shoulder toward him since he signed with new manager Prince. Formerly, Page was represented by Carl King, Don's son.

If anything, Prince feels misunderstood amid the swirl of controversy surrounding him. First, Prince (formerly James Smith) wants to set the record straight: He says he is *not* the cause of the much publicized squabble between "Pretty Boy" and his father, Floyd Sr. After being released from prison, Floyd Sr. took over corner duties for his son, starting with the Sam Girard fight on February 28, 1998, in Atlantic City. Floyd Sr. blames Prince's involvement with his son for the father-son rift.

"It's hurt his career already," Floyd Sr. told the Associated Press' Tim Dahlberg. "Ever since this man [Prince] came into play, things have gone downhill. The rappers are [Floyd's] crowd now."

To this, Prince laughs. No one, he said, has tried to get his version of the story before now.

"I don't think, technically, they ever broke apart," Prince said of the Mayweathers' situation. "In fact, I highly recommend Floyd and his father stay togeth-

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Exciting IBF junior welterweight champ Zab Judah, pictured putting the finishing touches on Jan Bergman to win the vacant title by fourth-round kayo in February, has been rumored to be another champ in line to join Prince's growing number of fighters.

er. Let's get something straight: Of all the bad things his father said about me, I never said a bad thing about his father. I don't have anything bad to say about Floyd's father. The only thing I ask is I just wish his father would respect my business position. In fact, he doesn't have to. I'm going to earn my respect from Floyd [Sr.].

"I'm a family man and it doesn't hurt me being looked at this way, because I know I'm not a wedge between Floyd and his father. Other people and the public know only one side of the story. Some of these writers are bought by [Bob] Arum [Mayweather's promoter]. Not all of them, but definitely some of them. I know what a lie is. I read the stuff; I see a lot of it. Even at the press conference with Floyd after the [Goyo] Vargas fight, I was asked very few things. You have to realize that Bob's been in the business for 30 years and he has a lot of friends. I have to stress he doesn't own everyone, but some are definitely in his pocket."

(Continued on page 57)

FLOYD ANNOYED

Floyd Mayweather looked good but not spectacular beating Goyo Vargas via unanimous 12-round decision in his fifth defense of the WBC super featherweight title on March 18 in Las Vegas. Even so, most of the talk before, during, and after the fight was about "Pretty Boy's" feud with his father, Floyd Sr., and his promoter, Bob Arum—and his relationship with his new manager James Prince.

A few weeks after the Vargas fight, Mayweather, 23-0 (17), told THE RING that the negative gossip floating around him, portraying him in a bad light, was unjustified. Mayweather was eager to talk about what has been going on between him, his father, Prince, and Arum.

Among Mayweather's pet peeves is IBF counterpart Diego Corrales, who was also on the March 18 card and looked impressive scoring a third-round stoppage of Derrick "Smoke" Gainer. Arum would love a unification bout between Mayweather and Corrales, but, according to Mayweather, the attractive matchup may not happen.

"Bob is getting under my skin with this Diego Corrales stuff," Mayweather said. "I'm not letting Bob Arum control me no more, and that bothers Bob. They want to control my friends, and they control my father. I also had suspicions that people close to me may have been stealing. That's why they don't work with me anymore.

"Bob Arum wants that fight with me and Corrales. That puts money in Bob Arum's pockets, so for that reason, I don't know if I want that fight. Bob Arum doesn't want me to have any money, because he's giving it all to De La Hoya. All I ask is

Photo by Chris Farina

that he let me go. I'm not happy with Bob right now. I think he's doing everything against me."

Mayweather has been criticized by Arum for not filling seats. And even though HBO Sports President Seth Abraham recently called Mayweather one of the cable giant's elite fighters, the Mayweather-Vargas fight drew a 7.0 rating on *Boxing After Dark*, which was slightly below average.

"I sure can't fill seats when I'm not promoted, and I'm not promoted," claimed Mayweather. "People know me because of the show I put on. All the promotion I get comes from HBO. If Arum says I can't fill seats, then let me go. I can sit out my contract with Arum. I don't have to fight for two years, to be honest. I'm not desperate for money."

—JS

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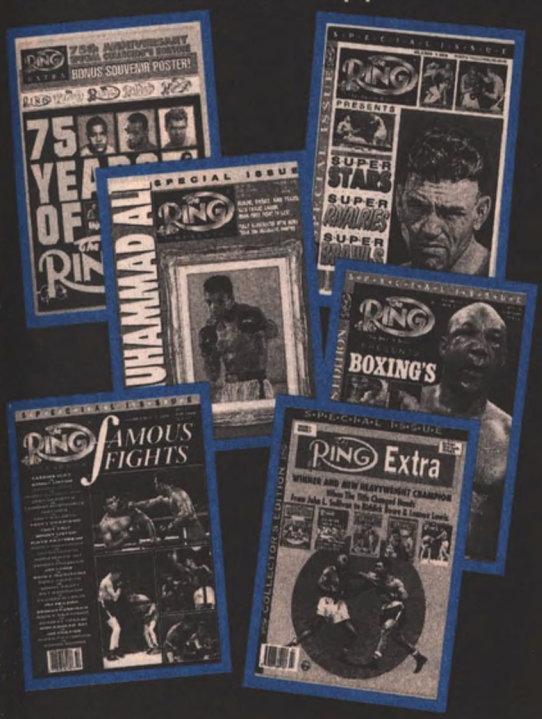

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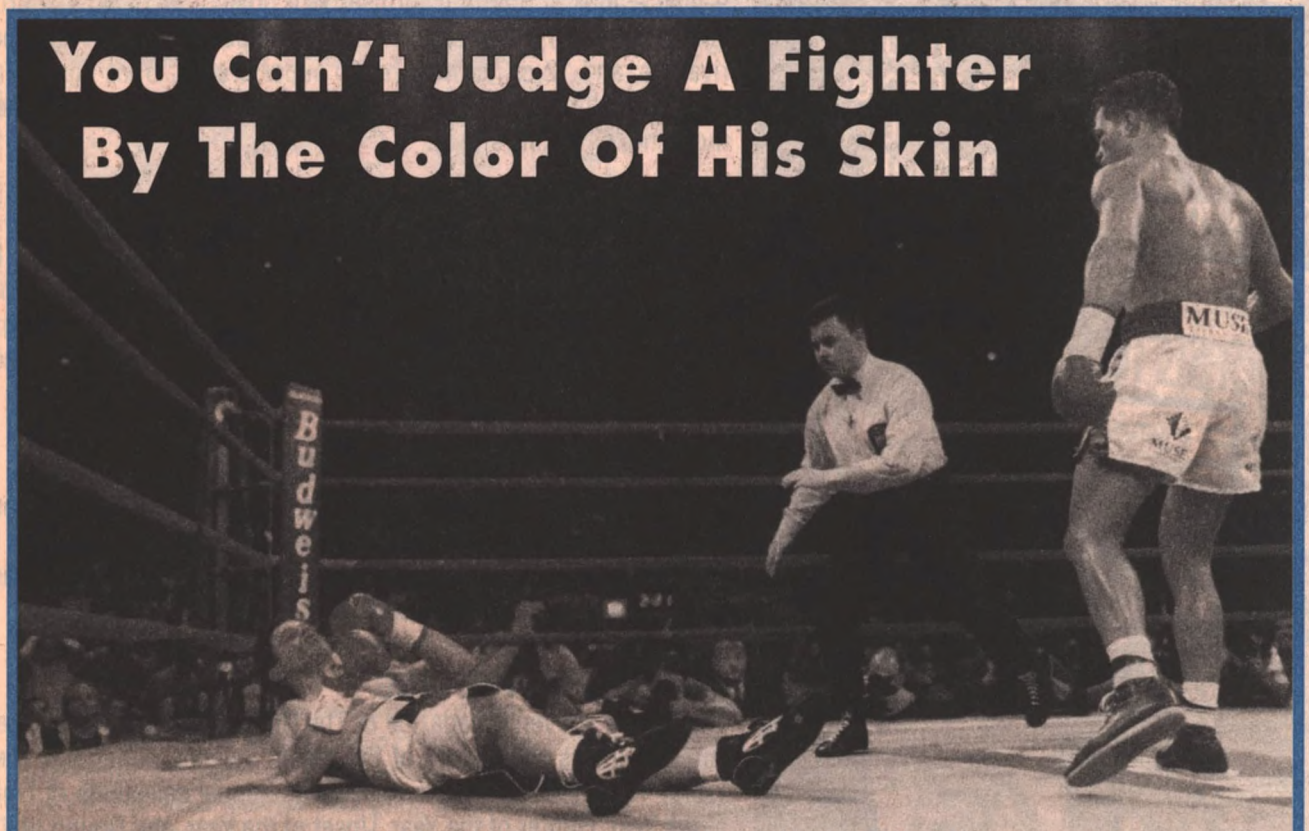
WHITE HOPES AND HARD REALITY

You Can't Judge A Fighter By The Color Of His Skin



Arturo Gatti, pictured knocking out Joey Gamache, fits the stereotypical image of a white fighter—big puncher, no defense. But there are plenty of contradictions to this oversimplification.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

By Ivan Goldman

It's been a while since Hollywood broke the ice and asked whether white men can jump. So by now maybe it's safe to inquire whether they can fight, too.

Conventional wisdom says white males are too busy looking after their polo ponies and cabin cruisers to indulge in the sweet, rough science. But upon closer examination, one finds that this generalization, like all others, leads to mistakes.

Just as there are African-American arbitrageurs thriving in the financial world, there are also plenty of white guys wearing K-mart shirts and driving pickups, all of them eager to get on Jerry Springer and throw chairs at somebody.

And there are still enough white fighters to maintain their pigment's presence in the game. In a sport that thrives on ethnic rivalries, it's worth taking a well-intentioned look at the white fighters who break all the stereotypes and labor alongside their minority brothers (and sisters).

If the subject matter makes you a bit uneasy, don't worry. This article has been carefully crafted to offend everyone. Besides, ethnic rivalries are remarkably civilized among the fighters themselves. It's such a tough game, anyone who takes part in the controlled madness that is professional boxing tends to respect everyone else willing to play.

When you look at the demographics, you know where society breeds its prize fighters. These were not guys who could choose between hiring a tennis coach and playing lacrosse for Princeton. They come

from the bottom, the dismal, neglected neighborhoods taxi drivers won't enter without a religious medallion on the mirror and a ballpeen hammer on the seat.

Fifty, sixty years ago those neighborhoods bred lots of Irish, Italian, and Jewish fighters. Now it's mostly African-Americans and Latinos. Still, in the 17 divisions from heavyweight to strawweight, counting all three major alphabet groups, there were eight white champions as we went to print: IBF cruiserweight Vassiliy Jirov, WBC cruiserweight Fabrice Tiozzo, IBF super middleweight Sven Ottke, WBC super middleweight Markus Beyer, WBA super middleweight Bruno Girard, IBF lightweight Paul Spadafora, IBF featherweight Paul Ingle, and WBA super bantamweight Bones Adams. That makes 44 champs (a few titles are vacant or unified), eight white guys, a percentage of just over 18 percent.

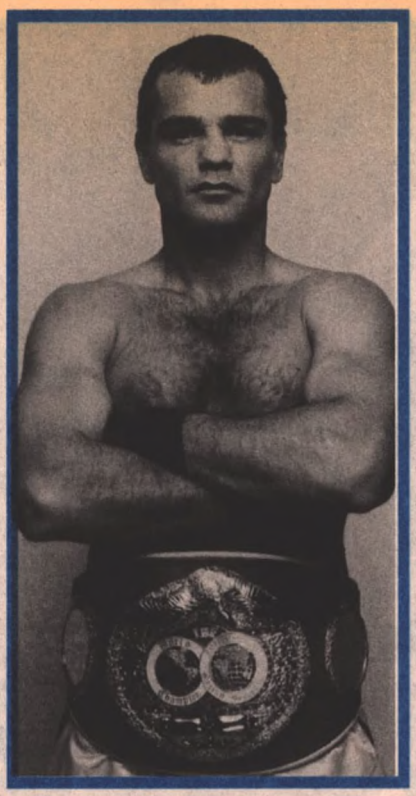
The editors, whose files are expansive as Butterbean after breakfast, say that a random search through the championship lists 10 years ago yielded six white champions. This indicates that the percentage of white champions is not getting any smaller. But just as all minorities are certainly not alike, neither, to be sure, are members of the white majority.

White fighters have a reputation as big bangers, guys who don't box or move much—Arturo Gatti and Micky Ward kinds of guys. They're great fun to watch, and they win more than they lose. But because they lack defense, they aren't the best. Consider, though—who is the time-honored, quintessential stick-and-move genius? The great (white) Willie Pep. Stereotypes won't always explain reality.

When super middleweights Bruno Girard and Byron Mitchell get together, it's Mitchell, the black fighter, who is the slugger, and Girard, the white Frenchman, who uses the ring to slip and score.

Nowadays, many of the white fighters, like Girard, hail from Europe, a healthy slice of them from the former Eastern Bloc. Although only one champion, Jirov, is a bona fide Eastern European, more and more fighters from the defunct Soviet Union are knocking at the gate. This creates a problem. Because although some of them can fight, it's extremely difficult to tell them apart.

They are, as a rule, glum, troubled beings with hair that looks like sand-colored crab grass. They also have attitudes. They lost the Cold War and don't look pleased about it.



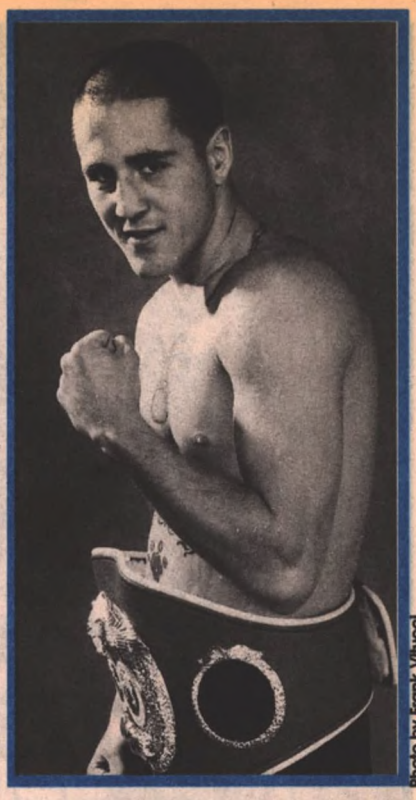


Photo by Frank Vilucci

Both IBF super middleweight champ Sven Ottke and IBF lightweight titlist Paul Spadafora are white fighters who depended on brains more than brawn to box their way to the top of their respective weight classes. Ottke and Spadafora both sport undefeated records.

Their parents toiled in loud, dusty factories that made stuff no one will buy anymore, and they don't want to fall into the same, bottomless trap. Adrift in the new global economy, they long to send Amerikansky fighters on quick trips to Queer Street so they can buy a car bigger than a breadbox. But do they have the tools to succeed?

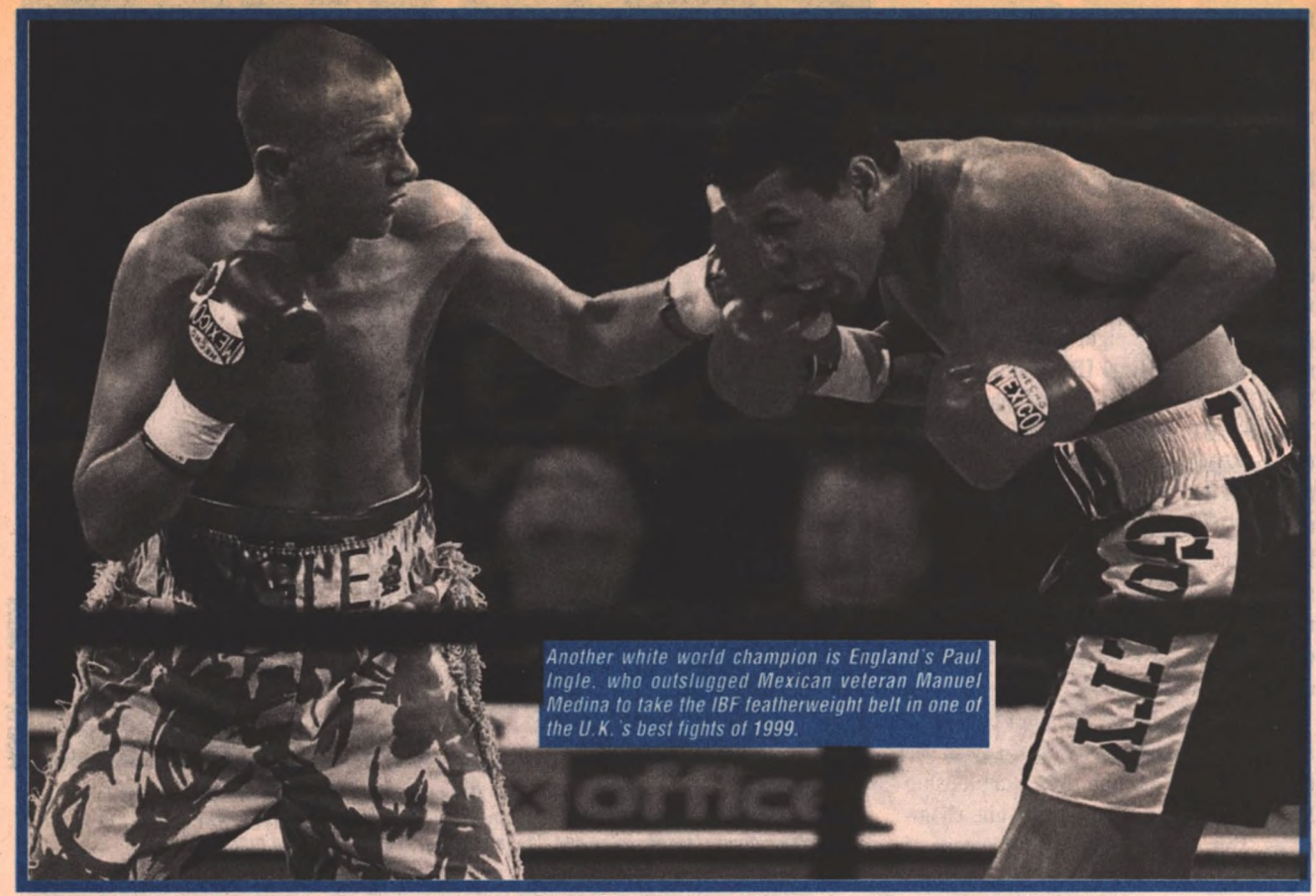
Many do indeed pack a punch, and in recent years, some have learned to move their feet and heads from time to time. They are dangerous. When you come from a country where they feed you black bread and onions for breakfast, you will be both hungry and mean. Even the nuns pack big right hands.

Andrew Golota, a Polish national who fights out of Chicago, can trade with the best of them. He's quick for a big man, moves, punches, and reacts well. But like his African soulmate Ike Ibeabuchi, he has emotional problems that prevent him from achieving his true potential. In other words, both of them are nutty as trail mix, which is why they aren't champions.

Another notable Eastern bloc refugee, Vitaly Klitschko, is memorable because he had the guts or poor sense, depending on your point of view, to get in a ring with the tricky, borifying Chris Byrd. Although Byrd projects all the excitement of cold spaghetti and has fists of Styrofoam, he makes everybody look bad. And looking bad is almost as humiliating as getting kayoed. Therefore, heavyweights of stature treat Byrd like he's selling bubonic plague. Don't call us, we'll call you.

You get the feeling Klitschko didn't consider all the possibilities. As he tried to catch the elusive Byrd somewhere inside Berlin, Klitschko deserved credit for not succumbing to road rage. But as the bout moved into the middle rounds, Klitschko, who looks like he could stand eye to eye with a giraffe, started stepping back—a very bad sign. How does a guy with superior height and reach expect to win stepping back? It didn't add up.

And, of course, the towering Ukrainian quit on his stool after nine rounds of a 12-rounder, complaining of a painful shoulder. HBO commentator Larry Merchant looked more overwrought by this decision



Another white world champion is England's Paul Ingle, who outslugged Mexican veteran Manuel Medina to take the IBF featherweight belt in one of the U.K.'s best fights of 1999.

than the stone-faced Klitschko. In fact, we would all have been better served had somebody slipped Larry a sedative. But his reaction was understandable. Not that it's a racial thing. It's just that everyone is tired of seeing yet another slow white hope get in the ring and destroy hope.

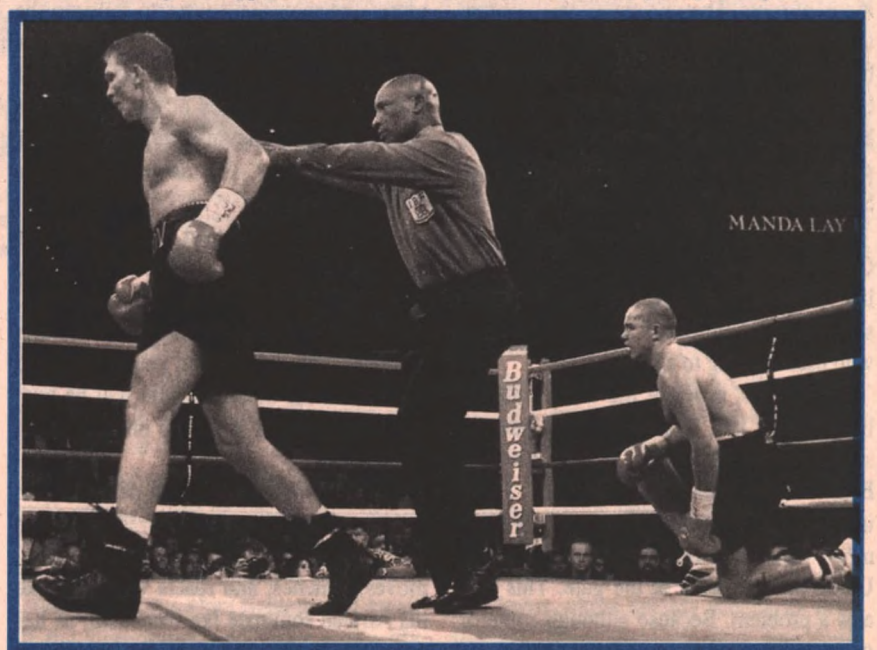
It's worth asking, though, just who is doing all this hoping? When your average white fight fans see an African-American up against some bleached out foreigner from East Slobovia, probably 98 percent of Americans are rooting for their countryman to destroy the bum. The other two percent have cousins in East Slobovia.

Fans of white hopes can take comfort in the fact that no one can name a whole lot of them that lack heart. True, Gerry Cooney, Tommy Morrison, and the late Jerry Quarry could rarely take that hill when it was held by a truly formidable opponent. But they got plenty close to the top. And nobody ever saw them retreat.

But there we go, indulging in generalizations that always have exceptions. It's just that kind of subject. It involves stereotypes, all of which are based on at least some degree of truth.

For example, anyone fighting on the southern or midwestern club card circuit, whether black, white, or extra-terrestrial in ancestry, doesn't figure to last more than four minutes with an opponent from outside Elvis Country.

Jack Basting is a typical midwestern white fighter, and also a heavyweight, which makes him even more typical. You ask who is this guy Basting. Well, he appeared on a card not long ago in Irvine, California. Somebody shipped him in from Minnesota, but they forgot to put a com-



Vassiliy Jirov floors Dale Brown en route to a 10th-round knockout in defense of the IBF cruiser crown. The undefeated Jirov, from Kazakhstan, is one of the growing number of fighters from the former Soviet Union currently plying their trade in America.

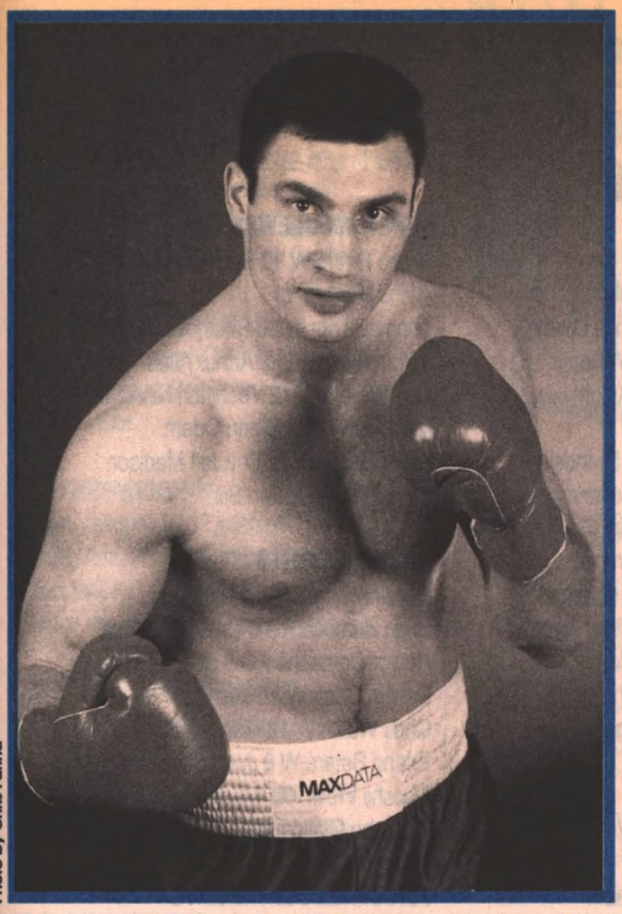


Photo by Chris Farina

Vitaly Klitschko, Europe's latest heavyweight white hope, failed miserably in his TKO loss to American Chris Byrd. The Ukrainian, who fights out of Germany, quit on his stool with a shoulder injury even though he was ahead on the scorecards.

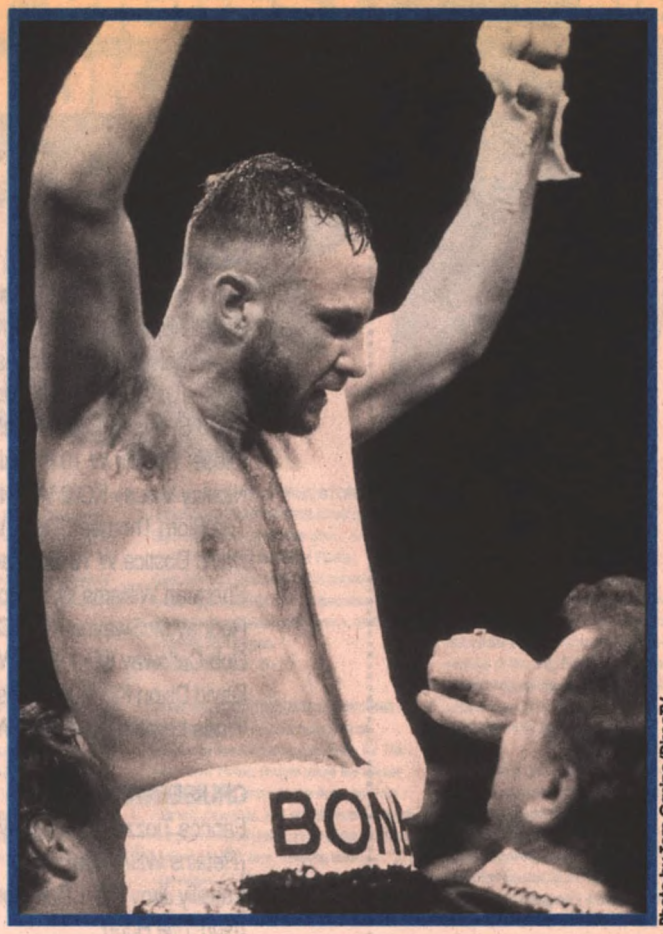


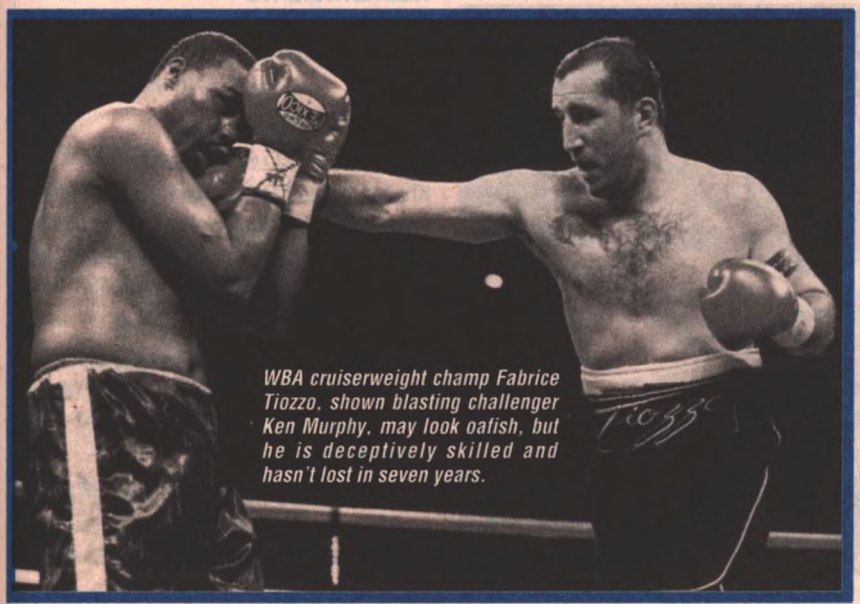
Photo by Tom Casino/DirecTV

A recent success story was that of Kentucky's Bones Adams, who virtually came out of nowhere to take the WBA super bantamweight title away from hard-hitting Nestor Garza in a major upset.

plete nose in the crate. Most of his had long since been accordioned deep inside his face. Talk about truth in packaging, Basting was actually shaped like a tomato can. If he ever started rolling, he wouldn't stop for a good 200 yards.

Basting, 22-14, faced David Dixon, 20-3, an African-American with a decent rep. Basting's best chance figured to come if the bigger, stronger, taller, swifter, younger Dixon ever got tired from hitting him.

The bell rang, Basting threw a half-hearted jab, Dixon came under it with a wide hook-uppercut to the head, and it was all over in 27 seconds. Typical.



WBA cruiserweight champ Fabrice Tiozzo, shown blasting challenger Ken Murphy, may look oafish, but he is deceptively skilled and hasn't lost in seven years.

And yet we have the clever Bronco McKart out of Michigan and Bones Adams from Kentucky, who, when he was only 18, lasted 10 rounds with Orlando Canizales before getting stopped in the 11th. And what about Angel Manfredy? I know. Manfredy is Puerto Rican.

Look, we're not going to investigate anybody's gene pool, but some Hispanics are in fact as white as the next white guy. If Manfredy, a blue-eyed, fair-haired, Clorox-skinned dude from Indiana isn't white, who is? And what about WBC super welterweight titlist Francisco Castillejo? He looks white, but he's from Spain, which makes him Hispanic. Right?

And in answer to the question of whether white guys can fight, the answer, of course, is the same as for minorities. Some can, some can't. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Chris Byrd KO 9 Vitaly Klitschko
Danell Nicholson KO 2 Terrance Lewis
Brian Nielsen KO 3 Thomas Williams
Robert Davis KO 5 Keith McKnight
Obed Sullivan KO 3 Jeff Lally
Eliecer Castillo W 10 Frankie Swindell
Nicolay Valuev KO 2 Yuri Nikolaev
Tue Bjorn Thomsen Tech. Win 10 Nate Miller
David Bostice W 10 Zuri Lawrence
Sherman Williams W 10 Ron Guerrero
Rodney McSwayne KO 4 Quinn Navarre
Rob Calloway KO 1 Troy Weida
David Dixon KO 1 Jack Basting
Wade Lewis KO 1 Walter Wiggins

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Fabrice Tiozzo KO 6 Valery Vikhor
(Retains WBA Title)
Vassiliy Jirov KO 1 Don Normand
(Non-Title Bout)
Johnny Nelson KO 7 Pietro Aurino
Uriah Grant KO 2 Thomas Hearns
Christophe Girard KO 10 Stefan Anghern
Ezra Sellers KO 4 Willard Lewis

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Darren Corbett KO 2 John Lennox Lewis
Thomas Ulrich KO 8 Cleveland Nelson

Hector Camacho stings Bobby Elkins with a jab

Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Demetrius Jenkins KO 6 Pierre Karam
Julian Letterlough KO 1 Troy Weaver
Dan Sheehan W Disq. 6 Elvir Muriqi
Jacqui Frazier-Lyde KO 1 Wanda Gamble

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Bruno Girard W 12 Byron Mitchell
(Wins WBA Title)
Thomas Tate W 10 Beethoven Scotland
James Butler KO 2 Arthur Allen
Guy Waters W 12 Yoshinori Nishizawa
Mario Veit KO 5 Glenn Odem
Harry Spadafora KO 1 Jeff Madison
Laila Ali KO 3 Karen Bill

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Hassine Cherifi KO 1 Alex Lubo
Brian Barbosa KO 6 Urbano Gurrola
Hector Camacho KO 5 Bobby Elkins
Darren Obah W 10 Les Crow
Chris Walsh W 12 Manuel Esparza
Erland Betare W 8 Juan Soberanes
Rhoshii Wells KO 4 Cordell Parker
Tokunbo Olajide KO 5 Carl Cockerham

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Francisco Castillejo KO 8 Mohamed Boualleg
(Non-Title Bout)
Kirino Garcia KO 12 Alfred Ankamah
Robert Frazier W 10 Purcell Miller
Fitz Vanderpool W 12 Bryon Mackie
Michael Lerma W 10 Mario Iribarren
Mikael Rask KO 4 Ashley Whiteboy
Anthony Farnell W 8 Ojay Abrahams

WELTERWEIGHTS
Jorge Paez KO 2 Jose Ocampo
Harry Dhami W 12 Derek Roche

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Randall Bailey KO 6 Rocky Martinez
Khalid Rahilou KO 2 Jozsef Kubosky
Felix Flores KO 7 Miguel Angel Ruiz
Lawrence Ngobeni KO 3 Andrei Sinepupov
Allan Vester W 12 Alan Bosworth
Michael Stewart KO 5 Jose Aponte
Terrance Cauthen W 10 Jose Narvaez
Ricky Hatton KO 4 Pedro Terran

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Cesar Bazan KO 7 Jose Luis Baltazar
Julien Lorcy KO 2 Roberto Vera
Billy Irwin KO 7 John Bailey

Jean-Baptiste Mendy W 8 Pedro Garcia
Joel Perez KO 2 Mike Cooley
George Scott W 8 Gianni Gelli
Leavander Johnson KO 4 Juan Polo-Perez
Bobby Vanzie KO 9 Stephen Smith
Yuji Watanabe KO 2 Stuart Patterson
Leonard Dorin W 10 Gustavo Cuello

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Tontcho Tontchev KO 4 Kirkor Kirkorian
Dennis Holbaek Pederson KO 3
Harold Miller

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Angel Vazquez W 12 Bernard Harris
Augie Sanchez KO 6 Jorge Paredes
Kozo Ishii KO 1 Jorge Murua
Hector Velasquez KO 7 Jesse Magana

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Lehlo Ledwaba KO 9 Ernesto Grey
(Retains IBF Title)
Carlos Contreras KO 5 Tomas Valles
Carlos Navarro W 10 Luis Lizarraga
Nedal Hussein W 12 Brian Carr

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Ratanachai Vorapin W 10 Hasan Ngabalin
Ady Lewis W 12 Francis Ampofo
Noel Wilders W 12 Kamel Guerfi
Esham Pickering W 10 Kevin Gerowski
Toshiaki Nishioka KO 2 Rodel Llanita
Debind Thapa No-Contest 1 Dan Davis

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Adonis Rivas Tech. Win 11
Pedro Morquecho
Joel Luna-Zarate KO 9 Roberto Bonilla
Akihiko Nago W 10 Felix Marfa

FLYWEIGHTS

Sompichai Singwangcha KO 5
Gilberto Gonzalez
(Retains WBA Title)
Gerson Guerrero W 12 Oscar Arciniega

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Jorge Arce W 10 Juan Javier Lagos
Andy Tabanas KO 1 Wonoroya Subandi

STRAWWEIGHTS

Joma Gamboa W 12 Atsushi Sai
Khulile Makeba W 12 Mawanda Simeko

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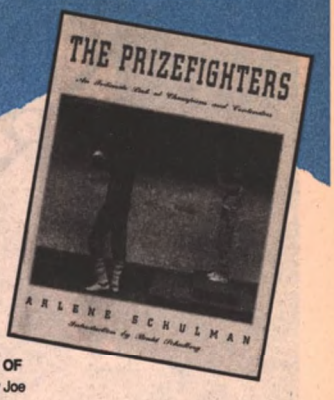

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

"The Prince" was not knocked to the canvas repeatedly. He did not run shamelessly from a light-hitting opponent. He did not reach the brink of exhaustion. He didn't even bodyslam anybody as though he was going for the three-count and not the 10-count. All Hamed did against Vuyani Bungu was *fight*, and he did it darned well.

Naz' fourth-round knockout of Bungu was especially impressive when you consider the pressure put on the British braggart by HBO. It was no secret that the cable network wasn't pleased with the recent efforts of the highest-paid featherweight in history, so the original plan was to put Hamed in with Junior Jones, an opponent sure to entertain, and sure to end up flat on his back. But Jones fell out, and Hamed was left with the tricky Bungu, the last guy in the division you would choose to face if looking good was a top priority.

But Hamed was up to the task, dominating an opponent who hadn't lost in eight years and had never been kayoed. An underachiever so often recently, Hamed far exceeded expectations on this occasion. He extended his career-long winning streak to 34 and, more importantly, brought his three-fight losing-popularity streak to a desperately needed halt.

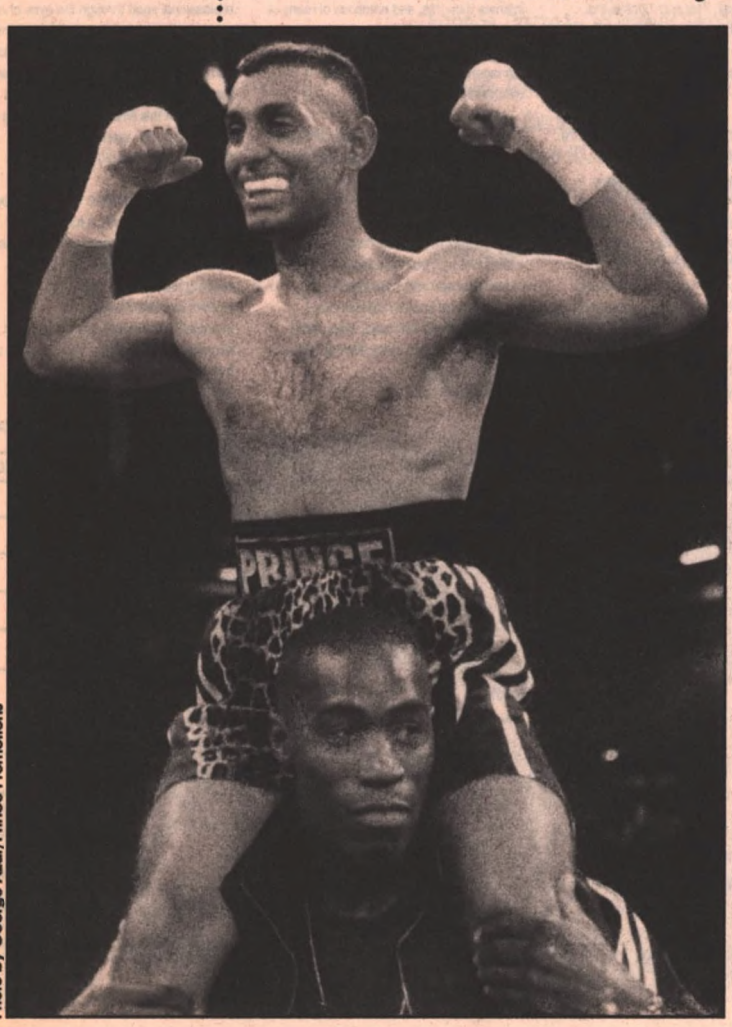


Photo by George Azar/Prince Promotions

• • • •

Naseem Hamed

Hamed pours it on against timid Bungu

Naseem Hamed KO 4 Vuyani Bungu

London, England: A magic carpet transported Hamed, 126, England, from his dressing room to the ring at the Olympia and, yes, previously waning powers seemed to have been restored to full capacity when he dismantled former IBF junior featherweight titleholder Bungu, 125, South Africa, in four one-sided rounds to regain much-needed cred. But beneath the veneer of utter dominance lurked the inescapable truth that the South African was nowhere near the formidable challenge his impressive record suggested.

Unbeaten in eight years, with 13 successful defenses of the 122-pound title he won in thrilling fashion from Kennedy McKinney in 1994, Bungu promised something of a test for a man who had been depressingly disappointing in his three previous fights. But his supposed threat proved illusionary, which is to take nothing away from a disciplined, destructive performance by Hamed, who completed his task with consummate ease. But any impartial assessment of proceedings must highlight the challenger's surprising impotence. Not only was he never in the fight, not only did he not look like he would ever get into it, he looked like he did not even fancy the job of trying to get into it. Fear, and maybe inactivity, too—he had not boxed in 13 months—reduced him to a ghost. Not even the spirits of his ancestors, summoned theatrically by a witch doctor from his hometown on the walk to the ring, could save him.

From the outset, the pattern was clear. Bungu, 37-3 (19), employed a peek-a-boo guard that seemed to be more a sign of his demoralized spirit than of his strategy. At no point did he show any inclination to engage at a distance from which he might achieve some offensive breakthrough. Hamed, 34-0 (30), had roared in Arabic into ring announcer Michael Buffer's microphone: "God is great," and he was further fortified surely by Bungu's neurosis. The 33-year-old challenger landed one right-hand counter in the first round that seemed threatening, but that was it in a round that otherwise was ruled by Hamed.

"The Prince" continued to control the action in the second, Bungu's balance remaining suspect, an indication of his anxiety. A small cut developed over Bungu's left eye in the third, and two hard right hands by Hamed, 26, looked ominous. Preoccupied by defense, Bungu allowed Hamed to continue to dominate, and it was no surprise when he was caught by a perfect straight left in the fourth. Referee Joe Cortez (USA) counted the challenger out at 1:38, and Hamed sought validation of his work.

"I've listened to all the critics say, 'When is Naz going to be at his best? When is that *invincibility* going to come back?' Well, when was the last time you saw me throw bodyshots like that and take someone out with a straight left hand?" he demanded. "No one before me has ever put him down or taken him out. Man, he got stretched—clean, cold stretched."

He did. But he was a compliant victim.

Television: HBO

Promoters: Prince Promotions, Barry Hearn

(3-11-00)

Brian Doogan

Juan Carlos Gomez KO 2 Joseph Siluvangi

Lubeck, Germany: With unification on his mind, Germany-based Cuban Gomez, 189½, wasted little time in dispatching overwhelmed French challenger Siluvangi, 187½, to retain the WBC cruiserweight title for the seventh time at Hansehalle. Now his sights are firmly locked on another Frenchman, WBA cruiserweight titleholder Fabrice Tiozzo, whom Gomez wishes to meet before the end of the year.

Before that, though, he faces a mandatory defense against former middleweight and super middleweight champion James "Lights Out" Toney. Based on the recent form of both, the 26-year-old southpaw should encounter few problems. He believes he is the best cruiserweight in the world, and with some justification. A move up to heavyweight is his long-term goal.

Gomez had too much for the 30-year-old Africa-born Siluvangi, and that was clear from the outset. Utilizing his solid right jab, Gomez controlled the first round handily before landing a hard left counter in the second that knocked the challenger on his back, his feet stretched into the air. Bravely, Siluvangi, 22-2-1 (9), got back to his feet at the count of eight, but referee Larry O'Connell (England) wisely ruled him too dazed to continue and stopped the bout at 2:35 of round two.

"I was satisfied with my performance. I've improved my punching power, and it showed," Gomez, 30-0 (25), said. "My next great aim is to make a unification fight against WBA champion Fabrice Tiozzo. I want my manager to give me that chance this year. First, I must get past Toney. I have watched him on video, and he's a very strong fighter who faced many top-rated opponents in his career. For the fight against him, I will prepare particularly intensively."

Promoter: Universum Boxing
(3-11-00)
Brian Doogan

Floyd Mayweather W 12 Goyo Vargas

Las Vegas, Nevada: Mayweather's return to the ring after a six-month layoff was a mixed blessing. He easily made his fifth successful defense of the WBC super featherweight title by cruising past an outmanned Vargas, but the flash that has made Mayweather one of boxing's top rising stars was missing.

Mayweather, 130, Grand Rapids, Michigan, won a unanimous decision, taking nearly every round by using his vastly superior speed. But other than a sixth-round knockdown, which came via a perfectly placed left to the liver, Mayweather never had Vargas in trouble. Vargas, 130, Mexico, just didn't have the quickness or the power to press Mayweather, who drew the ire of the crowd on more than one occasion for his showboating.

Mayweather, 23-0 (17), fought in spurts and said afterward that he had been bothered by a right hand injury that he suffered during training. As a result, he never threw the big shots that might have ended his night early. Still, "Pretty Boy Floyd" showed he has all the physical tools to dominate his division.

"Floyd Mayweather Jr. is the best junior lightweight in the world and he would be the best lightweight if he chose to fight at that class," said Mayweather's father/trainer, Floyd Sr.

One of Mayweather's strengths is his superb defense, and rarely did he allow the 29-year-old Vargas, 40-7-1 (28), to hit him. He didn't need to use his legs, as he could stand in front of Vargas and either pick off shots with his hands and shoulders or simply twist and turn to get out of the way of trouble. It wasn't the most crowd-pleasing fight in the world, but it was impressive to watch a fighter so young show such impressive defensive skills. Still, Mayweather, 23, wasn't particularly impressed with his own defensive work.

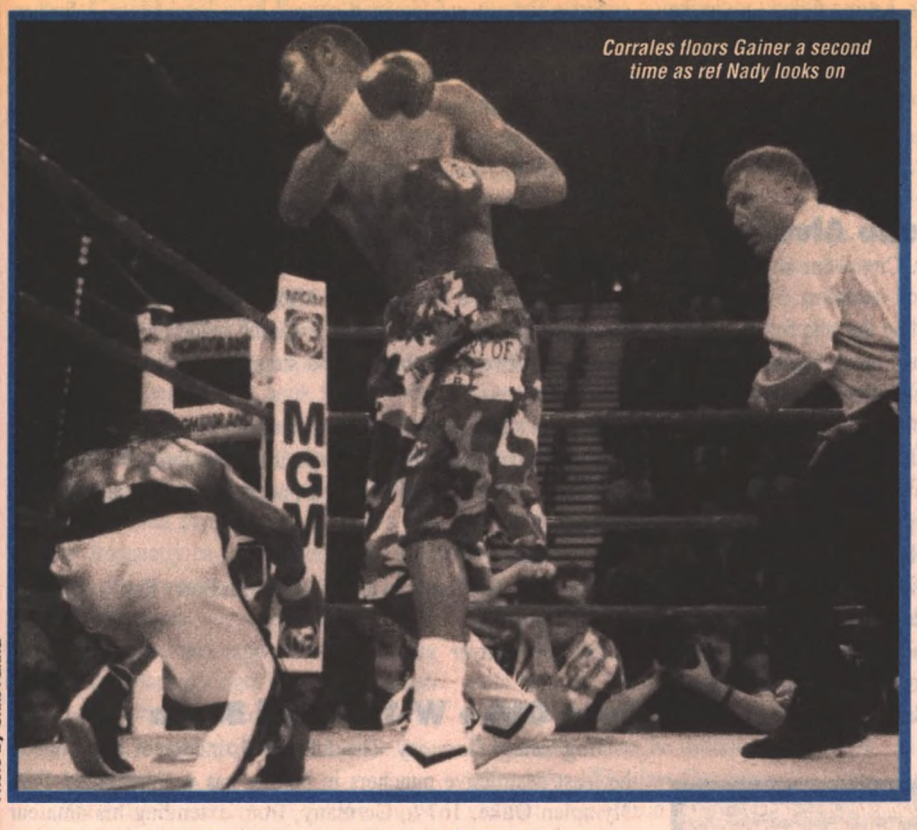
"I have to go work on my defense," Mayweather said afterward. "Actually, to be honest, I shouldn't be hit at all."

The challenger hit him just enough to avoid a shutout, as Mayweather won by scores of 119-108 from both John Keane (England) and Daniel Van de Wiele (Belgium), while Chuck Giampa (USA) had it 118-109. The referee was Richard Steele (USA).

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(3-18-00)
Kevin Iole

Photo by Chris Farina

Mayweather rips into Vargas with a right hand



Corrales floors Gainer a second time as ref Nady looks on

Photo by Chris Farina

Diego Corrales KO 3 Derrick Gainer

Las Vegas, Nevada: Corrales, the IBF junior lightweight champ, hoped to earn a shot at WBC 130-pound king Floyd Mayweather and wanted to use an impressive win over Gainer in his second title defense as a springboard to the big-money unification bout. Corrales got what he wanted, knocking Gainer down twice and stopping him at 1:50 of the third round when referee Jay Nady (USA) ruled Gainer could not continue.

Gainer, 130, Pensacola, Florida, the protege and best friend of undisputed light heavyweight champion Roy Jones, won the first round by using his lateral movement and flicking southpaw jabs and lead lefts at Corrales, who stalked but threw little. Gainer made the mistake of taking the fight to the inside in round two, and that was where the more powerful Corrales, 130, Sacramento, California, took command. Corrales won the second round on all three judges' scorecards by landing hard shots to Gainer's body, as well as a few shots to the head. When the second round was complete, Corrales knew it would be a matter of time.

"I knew he couldn't take inside pressure," Corrales, 22, said. "I waited for him to come inside. I knew he wasn't going to stay out there all day. I thought it would take me five or six rounds."

The end came suddenly for the 27-year-old Gainer. The two were fighting at close range in the first minute of the third, with Corrales seemingly getting the better of it, though not by much. That changed when a blistering left hook sent Gainer down on his rear. He managed to beat the count, but Corrales, a great finisher, moved in to put him away. He landed a flurry of punches along the ropes, sending Gainer down for the second time with a left-right combination. Gainer got up and said "I'm fine" when Nady asked how he was, but Nady waved it off anyway. The Gainer camp protested, but Nady said "Smoke" was in no shape to go on.

"First, he went to get up and he fell back," Nady said. "Second, he could not focus on my eyes. Third, he was leaning and swaying."

The stoppage appeared to be a bit premature, as, despite Nady's comments, Gainer, 33-5 (21), looked quite steady on video replays. But Corrales felt it would not have made a difference if the ref would have let it go on.

"If he would have got up, I would have gotten him again," Corrales, 31-0 (25), said.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(3-18-00)
Kevin Iole

Gilberto Serrano KO 5 Hiroyuki Sakamoto

Tokyo, Japan: Lanky Venezuelan Serrano, 134½, came off the canvas twice in the opening session and fought back to completely close the right eye of Japan's Sakamoto, 134½, forcing a stoppage at 2:27 of the fifth round at Ryogoku Sumo Arena. It was Serrano's first defense since he captured the title via a 10th-round TKO of Italian Stefano Zoff last November.

It didn't take long for Serrano to find himself in the first major crisis of his title reign. Sakamoto's first landed punches, a left-right combination, put the champ on the seat of his trunks. Serrano rose, but the Japanese brawler had him on the deck again moments later with a vicious left hook. As the three knockdown rule was in effect in this bout, people expected that Sakamoto's coronation was all but assured. But the champ found a way to barely last through the nightmarish opening canto, and Sakamoto sustained a gash under the left eyebrow before the round was over.

Serrano, 29, regained his coolness and rhythm in the second round, and he caught the onrushing Sakamoto, also 29, with a sickle-like left uppercut that caused his right eye to swell badly. The Venezuelan outjabbed Sakamoto as well, completely dominating the second round. Serrano turned to the lefty stance and countered the game but slow Japanese challenger to take another point in the third. Though Sakamoto seemed to have difficulty seeing the champ through his almost closed eye, he kept boring in to occasionally pin Serrano to the ropes with flurries of punches.

In the fifth, referee Mitch Halpern (USA) had Sakamoto's right eye examined by the ring physician and allowed him to go on. But, seconds later, Halpern saw that he wasn't able to see his opponent well, so he made the doctor check his eye again. He had no choice but to wave his arms and declare a TKO win for Serrano. After the fourth session, all the scoresheets were identical, with Sakamoto leading 38-36 on the cards of Duane Ford (USA), Rodolfo Maldonado (Panama) and Erkki Meronen (Finland).

The stoppage raised Serrano's mark to 20-4-1 (17). Sakamoto,

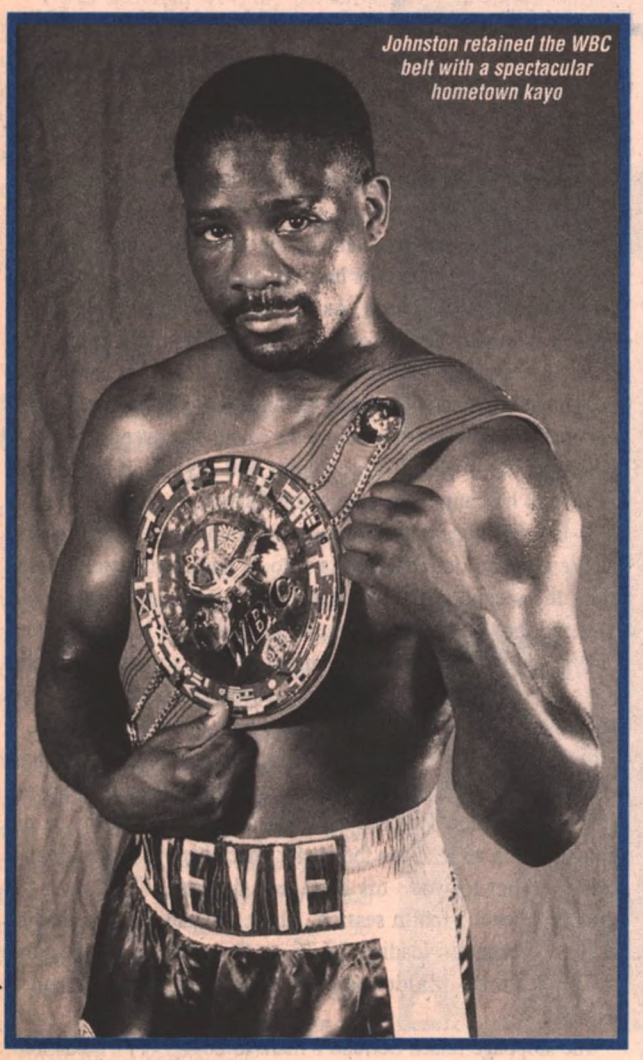
35-4 (26), fell to 0-3 in world title bouts, having failed to win the WBC 135-pound throne against Steve Johnston in 1997 and Cesar Bazan in '98.

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions
(3-12-00)
Joe Koizumi

Stevie Johnston KO 2 Julio Alvarez

Denver, Colorado: The Mile High City went sky high for native son "Li'l But Bad" Johnston, and it almost cost him the WBC lightweight title. Johnston, defending the title for the fourth time in his second reign as champion, had never before fought in front of such an enthusiastic gathering—the entire 8,000-seat arena at the University of Denver was sold out in just two weeks.

He had also never before gone less than the distance in any of his previous nine title bouts, but that pattern would quickly change. Johnston, 134, was overcome by the greeting he received as he entered the ring. He is usually a calm and cool fellow, but he apparently let his emotions take over, and in the second minute of the fight, Johnston was visibly overeager to please. Leaving himself open, he was caught by a punch (so ruled American referee Victor Drakulich, though there was also a clash of heads around the same time) and sustained a rather dangerous cut over his left eye.



Johnston retained the WBC belt with a spectacular hometown kayo

Photo by Chris Farina

Since the cut was deemed caused by a legal blow, Johnston, 27, decided to go for broke in the second round, rather then spending any more time than he had to exposing himself to a possible stoppage loss in his hometown. He took his more angular challenger and pressed him until Alvarez, 21-6-1 (17), had to give ground, finding himself backed to the ropes. With his man right where he wanted him, Johnston opened up with a barrage of unanswered punches, highlighted by a straight southpaw left followed by a right hook that took any remaining fight out of the 27-year-old Alvarez. While Alvarez, 135, Mexico, never touched down, he was virtually defenseless when Drakulich made the proper move, sliding in between the boxers and stopping the action at 2:35 of the round.

"I wasn't looking for the knockout, but my eye opened up so early, I decided to go for the knockout," Johnston, 30-1 (15), said afterward. "The ref said it was a punch, but it was definitely a headbutt."

Television: ESPN2
Promoter: Top Rank, in association with Barry Fay
(3-17-00)
Jack Obermayer

Sven Ottke W 12 Lloyd Bryan

Magdeburg, Germany: The dubious distinction of being one of the least destructive punchers in boxing has not prevented 1996 Olympian Ottke, 167¾, Germany, from extending his amateur achievements into the professional ranks. In his fifth defense of the IBF super middleweight title, against "Jabba" Bryan, 167¾, Jamaica, at a packed Boerdelandhalle, he even managed a knockdown on his way to a wide unanimous decision victory.

Since winning the title via split decision over Philadelphian Charles Brewer in October 1998, Ottke, 18-0 (2), has come through a formidable defense against Texan Thomas Tate and is confident he can successfully overcome Brewer again in a mandatory defense later this year. He has accomplished boxing skills, but if he knocked on your door, you could never be sure of hearing him. Nonetheless, he marches on, collecting a relatively hassle-free $140,000 paycheck for this assignment while donating 20 percent of his $170,000 sponsorship deal to AIDS relief.

Bryan, 20-4 (9) and ranked ninth by the IBF, achieved parity in the first, but was a lame duck challenger thereafter. The 32-year-old champion used his fast hands and nimble footwork to assume clear control, winning almost every round comfortably. A right cross had the 29-year-old Bryan down and in serious trouble in the 10th, but the bell intervened before Ottke could follow up. He maintained the steady flow of precise punches over the final two rounds and was satisfied about a job well done.

"I thought I boxed well and it all went very smoothly," he said afterward. "Some more time in the 10th, and I may have stopped him."

Manfred Kuchler (Germany) scored a complete shutout, 120-106, while Giulio Mancini (Italy) saw it 118-108 and Paul Artistt (USA) tabbed it 117-109. THE RING had it 119-108. The referee was Denny Nelson (USA).

Promoter: Wilfred Sauerland
(3-11-00)
Brian Doogan ■

Naseem Hamed

(Continued from page 37)

reluctance to move from junior featherweight up to 126 pounds, a sentiment he made clear to Morales, who has jumped to featherweight. The purse a Hamed fight would offer should persuade him. Inconceivably, he and Morales staged their dramatic battle for just $200,000 each.

Strengths: Deadly exponent of the Mexican trademark left hook to the body. His implacable will was stirringly evident against Morales, as was the power of his punch. Only Morales' remarkable resilience prevented utter capitulation. Barrera's fast hands frequently caught Morales unawares, and his chin proved granite-like.

Weaknesses: Susceptible to the overhand right that Jones exploited to devastating effect, and Hamed's right hand, even though he leads with it, is a formidable weapon. When hurt, his instinct is to fire back, a double-edged virtue.

Prediction: Barrera, 49-3 (36), might subject Hamed to more pressure than he has ever been under in any fight. He may even score a knockdown, and his body attack would be punishing. But Hamed's reflexes, provided his concentration remains total, could help him to evade the more threatening blows of Barrera. A compelling battle of wits. You dare not blink.

Bottom Line: Hamed W 12

ERIK MORALES

The WBC super bantam champ answered maybe the one remaining doubt about his pedigree when he withstood the sustained bombardment of Barrera and, in particular, some dynamic left hooks to the jaw. Though most observers believed his opponent deserved the decision, Morales emerged with genuine credit.

Immediately thereafter, he expressed his intention to move up to featherweight. The 23-year-old from Tijuana is an articulate, agreeable personality, beloved within his immediate community for his generous nature. Inside the ropes, however, he shows all the compassion of an assassin, his biggest wins coming against Daniel Zaragoza (KO 11), Junior Jones (KO 4), Wayne McCullough (W 12), and Barrera (W 12).

Strengths: A harder puncher than Hamed according to McCullough, who has fought both. His combination punching is disarmingly accurate, while his resolve and ability to withstand hard punches was proven emphatically against Barrera.

Weaknesses: Erratic defense frequently leaves him open, and he tends to cut and mark up around the face. He also is a slow starter. On occasion displays poor balance.

Prediction: Younger and a more devastating puncher, Morales, 36-0 (28), presents a challenge to Hamed he has never before faced. Rose heroically in the most searching examination he is ever likely to face against Barrera, despite the controversy of the decision. The economy of his punching could be crucial. If unable to rattle him, Hamed could be lost for answers.

Bottom Line: Morales W 12

FLOYD MAYWEATHER

Maybe more unappealingly narcissistic than Hamed, "Pretty Boy Floyd" demonstrated an increasingly worrying detachment from reality when he described a six-fight offer from HBO last October as "a slave contract." Slaves paid $2-million a fight are a rare breed.

Now managed by rap entrepreneur James Prince, the WBC super featherweight champion looked far from impressive against veteran Mexican Goyo Vargas in April.

Dubious application is perhaps ushering Mayweather down the sadly well-worn path toward self-destruction. But Floyd Mayweather Sr., the fighter's father-trainer, insists: "Hamed can't fight. He hasn't gotten better since he's been with Emanuel Steward. Matter of fact, he's gotten worse. Something ain't being done."

Strengths: Has pronounced hand and foot speed. His combinations are a brutal blur, while his confidence and desire prevent him from even contemplating defeat.

Weaknesses: Not a destructive single-punch exponent and betraying more than a few signs of losing the plot.

Prediction: Has the natural gifts to render Hamed a relatively impotent force. Has a marked advantage in speed that Hamed has never previously had to deal with. Mayweather, 23-0 (17), can induce the 26-year-old Sheffield star to lunge in before punishing him with machine-gun-like counters that would gradually take their toll.

Bottom Line: Mayweather W 12 ■

Brian Doogan is KO's European correspondent.

David Reid

(Continued from page 39)

even if I don't have a title, within myself, I still feel that I'm a champion. If I didn't believe that, I probably would have lost a long time ago."

The last time Reid, 14-1 (7), lost prior to dropping a unanimous 12-round decision to Trinidad on March 3 was 4½ years ago. That was when he was stopped by Cuban amateur star Juan Hernandez, a two-time world champion, at the World Championship Challenge in Macon, Georgia. Although the Hernandez fight was halted due to a cut on Reid's right eye, and the Trinidad fight went to the cards, Reid sees parallels between the two defeats.

"I was supposed to move up to 156, but Al [Mitchell, Reid's longtime mentor and trainer] told me to stay down and fight at 147 pounds," recalled Reid. "I should have moved up. But I stayed and fought at that weight. It was the same as the Trinidad fight, which showed me that it's time for me to move up to 160. There's no doubt in my mind that it was a wakeup call for me to move up to 160."

Reid has been complaining about how difficult it has been for him to make the junior middleweight limit of 154 pounds since shortly after turning pro in March '97. Mitchell, who has trained Reid since he was around 10 years old, does not agree.

"It's in his head," said Mitchell. "For the Trinidad fight, I made him eat more than he wanted to, and he still made 153. David is a natural 154-pounder, a strong 154-pounder. People look for excuses, and David is blaming the weight. It's a mental thing. A sports psychologist told me he won't improve until he acknowledges that the real reason he lost was because he didn't follow the game plan. I told people before the fight that if Dave listens to me, he'll win. If he doesn't listen, he's in for a tough fight. During the fight, I saw him looking out at the crowd. That's a fighter who has lost focus."

Dan Goossen, CEO of America Presents, the company that promotes Reid, takes a more broadminded approach to the weight issue.

"One thing is very important: We will

never make a fighter fight in a division that's unsafe for him," said Goossen. "But before a fighter moves up, we want to make sure it is because his old weight is unsafe. Maybe 160 pounds is best for David, but I don't want to rush to judgment. I want David to work with a nutritionist and do some extracurricular exercise, apart from the gym work he does with Al. Then we'll see what his best weight is. The most important thing is to do what's best for David."

There are those who question whether or not America Presents really does have Reid's best interests at heart. The morning after Trinidad, 37-0 (30), knocked down Reid four times en route to a one-sided victory, Goossen woke up to the following headline in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*: "Greedy Promoter Pushes Reid Way Too Fast." Columnist Joe Hawk went on to write, "Shame on you, Dan Goossen, for throwing David Reid to the lions. Shame on you for gambling with the young man's boxing career. Shame on you for putting him in the ring against an opponent with more than twice the experience, not to mention confidence-squared."

Goosen was aggravated. "I would have respected what he wrote if it had been written before the fight," he said. "But everybody has 20-20 hindsight."

"I wasn't rushed at all," said Reid. "The critics thought I was rushed, but I wasn't. I knew I could beat Trinidad, and when Dan told me about the fight, I said that I thought I'd school Trinidad."

Okay, so if it wasn't lack of experience, what went wrong? Well, for starters, the guy in the other corner was a future Hall of Famer, an undefeated fighter who has been a world champion since June '93 and has beaten three Olympic gold medalists—Pernell Whitaker, Oscar De La Hoya, and Reid—in a 13-month span.

"Yeah, he's what I would call a real gold medal killer," joked Reid, who is not averse to self-effacing humor or, for that matter, a candid appraisal of what happened to him in front of 10,100 fans at Caesars Palace and a pay-per-view audience of between 150,000 and 200,000.

Ironically, Reid's downfall probably started in the third round when he floored Trinidad with a picture-perfect right to the chin. Despite the fact that "Tito" had been down before, seeing him hit the deck was still something of a shock to Reid. It happened so quickly and so effortlessly.

"When he went down, I was surprised," said Reid. "I thought, *there he goes again.* So I ran to my corner and looked at him to see if he was dazed. But he wasn't dazed at all. He was gonna play a possum game, where I go out there and shoot my load, and then he would come right back and start to hit me with some good punches."

Although Reid claims he only made one mistake, and that it cost him the fight, he made several. Obviously, the first error was not going after Trinidad as soon as referee Mitch Halpern completed his mandatory eight-count. Instead of trying for the finish, Reid played it cool—too cool—and the moment passed. After the fight, Trinidad said he'd been hurt by the punch, but he hid it like a seasoned pro should, and Reid was fooled.

"I wanted to get him in that same position again, the position I had him in before, where I could catch him again with my right hand," said Reid. "I had an opportunity, and I didn't take advantage of it."

"I told him Trinidad was hurt and to be aggressive, but Dave was stubborn, he wouldn't listen to me," said Mitchell.

An even graver mistake came in the seventh round, at a point where Reid was leading on all three official scorecards. Trinidad had hurt him in the sixth with low blows, and had been penalized a point by referee Mitch Halpern, which helped Reid on the cards. But the bounce the low blows took out of Reid's legs ultimately proved more crucial than the deduction. The below-the-belt blows, however, were nothing compared to what Tito had in store for him the next round. In the seventh, a left hook impacted on Reid's chin with explosive force, and sent him lurching across the ring like a mime mimicking a drunk. Finally, with Trinidad in hot pursuit, he flopped down for the first of four counts.

"I didn't see it coming, but I did place myself in harm's way," said Reid of the bombshell that turned the fight around. "I should have stayed on the outside, but I made one mistake. I said to myself, *I'm going to stay on the inside and bang with this guy.* And once I made that mistake, he caught me with the left hook. After I got caught, I was doing everything I could to stay on top of my legs until I got my head right. But I just couldn't get my head back together until the last round."

By then, it was too late to accomplish anything beyond finishing on his feet, which Reid did. Still, he paid a painful price for his bravery when Trinidad turned him into a human yo-yo in the 11th, flooring him three times with thudding rights to the head.

"I knew I was getting beat bad, but it comes to a point when you have to swallow your pride," said Reid of the most traumatic round of his pro career. "I went down on my own a couple of times because I wanted to get my head together. I was hurt, man, in another state of mind. It's a good thing I was in tip-top shape because I would have got stopped."

Considering the thumping he took in the 11th, nobody would have blamed Reid if he'd stayed on his stool when the bell rang for the 12th and final round. But regardless of any shortcomings, Reid is a warrior, and if there was any way he could last the course, he'd find it.

Trinidad connected with a couple of solid shots early in the 12th, but as the fight entered the final minute, he began to coast, and Reid launched a couple of big right hands in a last-ditch effort to salvage the fight. He wasn't successful, but certainly proved the spirit was willing, even if the flesh was far too weary to accommodate him. Even Don King, Trinidad's promoter, was moved to mention the loser's courage.

"David Reid ain't got no heart problem," boomed the bombastic promoter. "He went down, he got up. He went down, he got up. He's already a helluva fighter."

Reid also displayed his class by showing up at the postfight press conference, refusing to make excuses, and admitting he had been beaten by a better fighter. It wasn't until THE RING visited him several weeks afterward that he complained about all the low blows Trinidad had landed, a claim that is clearly supported by the videotape.

"None of his bodyshots hurt me at all," maintained Reid. "It was the ones to my hip. He caught me on my hip, and right near my groin. He hit me with low blows so much, that's what took my legs. I was physically and mentally prepared for the fight, but I wasn't prepared for this guy to fight dirty. He fought me dirty, but, you know, he still won the fight. That's some-

thing I learned. Once you're in the ring, there's no holds barred. You can elbow, you can headbutt, you can hit a guy below the belt. You can do what you want to do."

According to Mitchell, Reid had been warned repeatedly in training camp to watch out for Trinidad's low blows and instructed that the first time the Puerto Rican hit him low, he was to immediately respond in kind. Trinidad's first south-of-the-border shot came in the third, shortly after he'd been knocked down, but Reid didn't retaliate until several rounds later, and was instantly issued a warning.

"Usually, when a guy hits me below the belt, I hit him back fast," said Reid. "But the referee was looking to take each and every point he could. He was looking to disqualify me. I hit him low once, and [Halpern] got on my tail. I hit him low again, and he took a point. Trinidad hit me low at least five times, maybe more. He hit me low so many times."

Yes he did, and although Halpern took points away from Trinidad in the sixth and 11th, the referee did seem to give Tito a bit more leeway than he did Reid. But all of that is academic at this juncture. The most important question now is what will Reid do next. He says he wants to test the waters at 160 pounds with one or two tune-ups, then go after the middleweight crown. Mitchell agrees with the tuneup part, but is adamant that Reid should stay, at least for the time being, at 154.

"Dave would lose a lot of his natural advantages in strength if he moved up," said Mitchell. "At 154, he's so strong, he's like Hagler was as a middleweight."

"You can't beat Mother Nature," countered Reid. "If you look at all the 154-pounders, they grew. I know for a fact that once I move up to 160, nobody is going to beat me. I've got to be in a weight class where I'm comfortable."

Regardless of who wins the dispute, both fighter and mentor agree that Reid still has a lot of fight left in his 26-year-old body.

"When I'm in that ring, it's my time to shine. It ain't nobody else's but mine," said Reid. "Knowing that Trinidad is probably going to the Hall of Fame, and I almost beat him, then I know nobody can beat me. In the next couple of years, I'm going to be dominant."

"You know what?" said Mitchell. "Dave is a better fighter than he thinks he is. If he learns from the Trinidad fight, he'll be a great fighter." ■

James Prince

(Continued from page 42)

Prince was raised around empty pockets. He is the oldest of five children that his mother raised in Houston's Fifth Ward. It's one of the roughest ghettos in Houston, nicknamed the Bloody Nickel because of the bloodshed caused by gang violence and drugs. He saw his mother toil every day to provide for him and his siblings. It spurred an industrious attitude and coaxed Prince into getting his first job at the tender age of eight. And as soon as he got out of high school, he went to work as a bank teller and insurance clerk.

All the while, Prince held a vision of something better for himself and his family. After being laid off from his insurance position, he took a job as a car dealer. He quickly noticed he had a way with people. They trusted him, opened up to him—and Prince was a success.

He invested his money wisely and began reaping dividends, thanks to the release of the 1990 hit rap song "Mind Playing Tricks On Me," on the album *We Can't Be Stopped* by The Ghetto Boys. Prince has a current roster made up of The Ghetto Boys, Do-Or-Die, Salt (from Salt-N-Pepa), Scarface, and Yuck Mouth. He often runs full-page ads in *The Source*, a magazine that caters to the hip-hop culture. Some rap industry insiders say Prince's label is more territorial than national labels like Arista, Bad Boy, or Electra, but it is, nonetheless, a label those in the business do recognize.

Whereas boxing was a choice, Prince stumbled into the rap business almost by happenstance.

"Actually, I fell in love with boxing about 13 years ago, maybe longer than that," Prince said. "I was supposed to go into boxing before I went into the rap business, but I got distracted by the rap business. Actually, my brother is a rapper, Sir Rap-A-Lot, and there were some guys in my hood who were skipping school and were rapping. I approached them about a deal: They stay in school and graduate, and I would be willing to back them and get them started in the rap business. They kept their word, went to back school, so I had to keep my word. I found myself getting deeper and deeper in the rap industry. But I never lost my love for boxing."

So much so that in '99 Prince built a boxing facility and basketball gym for the Houston community called the Prince Complex. The 15,300-square foot building houses a small stable of fighters that has grown to five, and includes world champs Mayweather and Page, who both now live and train in the Houston area.

Since inaugurating his boxing career, however, Prince has been confronted with nothing but scrutiny. When it was revealed that Prince was receiving a 20 percent cut of Mayweather's purses, as opposed to the 10 percent his father was getting, more than a few leery eyebrows were raised.

"To be honest, they're blowing things out of proportion," the younger Mayweather said. "My daddy is the best man in the world, but he's never been my manager. I want to clear that up right now. My daddy's always got his 10 percent trainer's fee. I'm not undefeated and a world champion for nothin'. I'm smart inside and outside the ring.

"I don't know why my father hates J. Sure, I'd like the three of us to sit down together, but that will never happen. It will never happen because Bob Arum controls my father, that's why we'll never be able to sit down and talk about this. What I'm telling the world is that I'm happier. My father wants to control me. My father still thinks I'm a child; I have a son of my own. I'm happier now that I have more control over everything.

"I'm comfortable and I'm secure, and I'm with someone who is out for me. James Prince let me choose to give up my own percentage; I gave him 20 percent. That was my decision. Anything I ask James for, he does, anything. Since I've been with James, my career has gotten a lot better inside and outside the ring."

Prince first met Mayweather in 1996, then ran across the young champion again in '99 through Tyson at the Golden Gloves Gym in Las Vegas. Prince and Mayweather kept communicating and eventually reached an agreement to work together. The ink wasn't even dry on the contract, however, when Prince walked into a maelstrom of controversy, and was forced to do some heavy damage control. Public opin-

ion turned against the fighter when Mayweather referred to a $12-million, six-fight deal HBO offered as a "slave contract." (Mayweather said the statement was taken out of context and that the actual quote was: "That's a slave contract, *compared to what Prince Naseem Hamed is making*.")

Still, Pretty Boy came off looking like an ingrate, spurning a contract offer that any boxer at his level of popularity should jump to sign. Some blamed Prince.

"That story initiated all of this speculation about me," Prince said. "I came in *after* Floyd had rejected the HBO contract. I'm not the cause of it. I told Floyd I would do my research and I would hire the best lawyers and find out the truth. We were able to look at Oscar De La Hoya's situation, Shane Mosley's, Michael Grant's. I was able to compare their deals with Floyd's and come up with an intelligent decision from there. The contract is still actually under negotiation, but the deal is much closer than we were. We've made some improvements where the deal is concerned. When all is said and done, it will be a good deal."

Prince points out that he has already helped boost Mayweather's bank account. According to him, Mayweather was to receive $750,000 for his March 18 fight with Goyo Vargas, but through the efforts of Prince and his management team, Mayweather's purse was raised to $1-million. Arum disputes that, stating that Mayweather received the original $750,000 they agreed upon. Seth Abraham, the head of HBO Sports, chose not to disclose the truth.

"We don't discuss our deals," Abraham said. "I have met with Prince several times, and spoken with him many times over the telephone. I think he's smart. He's a good listener. But this is the most important thing of all: He has the confidence of Floyd Mayweather. Floyd has every right to choose who represents him. Floyd holds him in high regard. So far, our dealings with Prince have been peaceful.

"The tension with a promoter and manager is different. The tension is a concern for us, if it becomes a distraction in the ring for Floyd and the public loses interest in him. I would like to see a truce between Top Rank and Floyd. Floyd is definitely in our plans in the future. I like to call him one of our jumbo jets, with Oscar, Naseem Hamed, Shane Mosley, Lennox Lewis; I would put Floyd in that group."

Influenced by Prince, Mayweather is even branching out into the music industry with his own rap label, Philthy-Rich-Records, based on building rappers Sacrifice (Stacey Mayweather, Floyd's cousin) and Jumbo (James Owens).

"That's the difference between having me and not having me," Prince said on his own behalf, "and that's not even mentioning the future things being done with Floyd's present contract with Arum."

Prince assumes a whimsical approach at the mere mention of the Hall of Fame promoter. Prince thinks he is perceived as a marauding intruder into Arum's sacred

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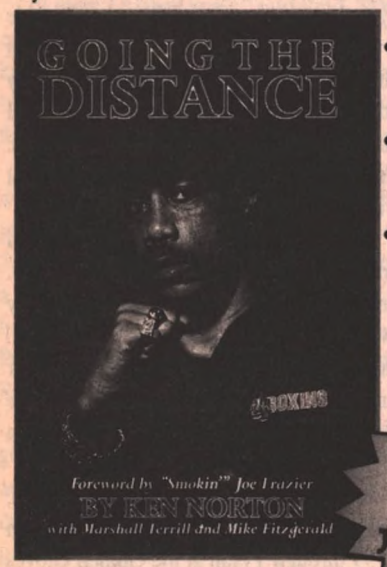

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realm. Arum, said Prince, has intimated that he and his group of rappers are a cult, insulating Mayweather from the realities of his status in boxing.

"'This rapper,' this is what they're using," Prince said. "I realized from Day One Mr. Arum's perception. It slipped out of his mouth one time, 'those rap people.' I'm not a rapper, but I've created a lot of rappers, and I think people have a tainted image when it comes to rappers, definitely the older generation. Everyone who is capitalizing on us brilliant guys affiliated with rap try to paint an image about us. There's no doubt about it, there is some form of racism going on here. When someone discriminates against anything, it's a form of racism.

"Floyd is much smarter than people give him credit for. This whole thing is about control. It's about people being in control and now it's about people threatening that control. Mr. Arum may not be able to pocket as much of Floyd's money as he has in the past."

Not so, says Arum. There has not been as much communication between the two camps as Arum would like. That gap has stirred unsubstantiated innuendo and hearsay. It's also created a festering feeling of distrust between two parties whose essential goal is the same—to make Mayweather a star. Arum says his impression of Prince is simply that he's an intelligent guy who he would like to sit down and talk to about Mayweather.

"This happens when a new guy comes on the scene," Arum said of Prince. "Hopefully, we could straighten that out. There has been a lack of communication, because a new guy comes in, he becomes leery of the guys who have been promoting his fighter. The person asking the questions about Prince is Floyd's father. The man raised the kid, only to have this happen. He's trying to figure out where Prince's cut comes from. That's between Prince and Floyd's father. Our problem is that we were moving Floyd on the fast track. The problem Floyd had with HBO held that up. We just haven't reached the stage where I can communicate with Prince, to the same extent we can with managers of other Top Rank fighters. Hopefully, in the future, we'll work together. People are trying to bridge the gap, like Seth Abraham of HBO and Prince's lawyer, Jeff Fried."

Prince admittedly would like more control in boxing. His name has not only been linked with Tyson, he has also been mentioned in connection with IBF junior welterweight champ Zab Judah, welterweight star Mosley, and heavyweight contender Grant. Prince said Don King was his inspiration to get into the boxing biz, and the bombastic promoter even complimented Prince. That was before Prince signed Page.

"Then I started to feel they felt a little different about me," Prince said with a laugh.

King was not too happy, confirms Page, when he signed with Prince. Carl King, Don's son, had been representing Page, along with Page's mother.

"Don King didn't want me or my mother to have any outside representation other than Carl," Page said. "I don't know if Carl could work for my best interests. Don wasn't too happy. Don and I have helped each other. He still promotes me, but I have my own representation. Mr. King didn't want to sit down and deal with my people. Prince has helped educate me. He's trying to do right by boxers, which might piss off a few promoters."

This puts a smile on Prince's face. There is an underlying tone of confidence, mixed with a tinge of arrogance to his words. But any Prince who aspires to enhance a boxer's business interests can quickly become viewed as a savior.

"Patience is the key, and I'm having fun," Prince said. "I feel like anything is possible. You have to realize all of these guys have been controlling the industry for 30 years. All of them could hate me. I'm looking forward to the challenge. It's 2000, it's time for new players to take over. It's my time now." ■

New Faces

(Continued from page 18)

them down. His manager and trainer, Stephan Larouche, says Dorin has a tremendous ability to absorb a punch, comparing his chin to a piece of scrap iron.

Dorin is still learning the pro game, though. As an amateur, he gained success with a minimal repertoire of punches because he knew how to win within the computer scoring system. Larouche now finds himself trying to unteach what was ingrained in Dorin as an amateur.

"Leonard said he never threw a jab in his life before turning pro," Larouche said. "Leonard needs to improve his ring knowledge, his savvy. We're just a few details from getting there. Leonard has to realize he can be more effective with less punches; he has to learn to pick his shots and look to see what he is doing. His Romanian trainer always told him he should never throw a jab, that he's too short to throw a jab. Any kind of fighter, it's a matter of how you use your tools. With Leonard, he was always stronger than his opponents. He would overpower them."

That has not happened in the pros. Dorin has gone the distance in 10 of his 14 fights, giving the impression that he lacks power. The fighter disputes that.

"I'm working on being more than a one-dimensional fighter, on my efficiency, on the bodypunching," Dorin said. "I know when I hit them to the body, it makes a lot of difference. I know I have very, very good power. The guys I've fought have been boxing for a long time. I know if I faced easier guys, I would consider myself a one-punch knockout guy. So far, I can't consider myself as a one-punch knockout guy. I'm using a lot of combinations, and yes, I do know when I hit them with one punch, I'm hurting them. When they start getting tired, I use my combinations and speed. I can fight, but I can box, also. To knock out a guy, I have to be more creative and use good speed and footwork."

When Larouche first began working with Dorin, he stressed defense, head movement, and versatility. He wants Dorin to be more creative, effective from the inside and outside. The lessons are slowly beginning to take hold. In a 10-round bout with Argentina's Gustavo "Iron Head" Cuello at Toronto's Air Canada Centre on April 6, Dorin took a split decision. This is the same Cuello who extended WBC super featherweight champion Floyd Mayweather the full 10 rounds in April '98.

Though he didn't exactly dominate the fight, Dorin pounded on the taller Cuello with hooks to the body. The only time he found himself in trouble was in the ninth, when Cuello opened up a cut over Dorin's left eye.

"Leonard's not typical of the Eastern

European fighter, because he's very aggressive, not like a typical stand-up fighter," said Patrick Commaughton, the matchmaker and promoter for Dorin's fight against Cuello. "He's developing, and I think it may take a little while. They're working with him very intelligently at InterBox [Dorin's Montreal-based promoters]. He is having competitive fights.

"He's not a big puncher, and when you fight these better fighters, you're not going to knock them out. Cuello was a durable guy; Floyd Mayweather didn't knock him out either. Leonard needs experience and he needs more work in the gym against better fighters. He's a mature man, he's not a kid, so he should mature very fast."

Dorin matured quite fast as child, growing up impoverished in communist Romania. His father died when he was seven, and his mother supported Leonard and his older sister by herself. Dorin feels he raised himself, that he didn't have a father and only saw his mother at night when she came back home from work. His life took a turn when he was 15, on the day he walked into a local gym to see what boxing was all about.

"I was in love with boxing," Dorin recalled. "After school was done, I was always in the gym, every night. Boxing is like real life. You have to face a challenge, you have to perform. You learn so many things. You have to suffer to be the best and you need discipline. You're learning for boxing and learning for yourself. It's like a school for life."

And for Dorin, his quality of life started improving quickly with each level of success in the ring. Because Romania was communist at the time, the state took care of Dorin's every need.

"I was not even thinking about leaving Romania and being a professional boxer," Dorin said. "I just competed for the love of the sport. A lot of things have changed since then, and everything has changed since coming to Canada. Your mind and your eyes, you can see so many things and dream about so many things that are here. When I was young in Romania, everything was so controlled. Here, you can own your car and get money and things you were not used to getting in Romania. The vision of life is greater here."

Even when you're peeking out from between a pair of boxing gloves. ■

Final Beating

(Continued from page 27)

name who wasn't too dangerous.

Cooney did well in the first, moving and popping Foreman with some stiff hooks, but in the second, he stood still and Foreman leveled him. Cooney got up and was blasted to the canvas again. KO 2. Afterward, he seemed almost giddy with the knowledge, finally, that this was his end, that there would be no more comebacks, no more sleepless nights. He became convinced, and that gave him peace.

Sometimes, one brutal beating isn't enough, especially if you've made successful comebacks a staple of your career. Sugar Ray Leonard retired for the first time in 1982, after discovering he had a detached retina. After a one-fight comeback victory in '84 over Kevin Howard, the former undisputed welterweight and WBA junior middleweight champ retired again and, miraculously, returned three years later to decision Marvelous Marvin Hagler for the middleweight title. After stopping Donny Lalonde, drawing with old rival Thomas Hearns, and dominating Roberto Duran in their rubber match, he retired again, at the age of 33.

But Leonard was restless in retirement and was unconvinced that he had no more greatness left in him. In '91 he returned again to face a young, fast Terry Norris, the WBC super welterweight titlist. After Norris pummeled him all over the Madison Square Garden ring, flooring him twice and cruising to an easy decision, Leonard said, "I had to find out for myself. It just wasn't there." He was finally convinced. Or was he?

For the next six years, Leonard stewed and stewed and gradually unconvinced himself again. Finally, in '97, at 40 years of age, he squared off against Hector Camacho, and was brutally kayoed—yes, by Hector Camacho—in five rounds and promptly re-retired. One would think that a knockout loss at the hands of Camacho would be enough to convince anyone that his day had passed, but Leonard blamed the loss largely on a leg injury. And as long as there's an available excuse, the door to doubt remains open.

Another Leonard, this one from a different era, also took his career to places it shouldn't have gone, long after what made him special had vanished. But it only took one brutal stoppage loss to convince him that his time was up. Benny Leonard, the outstanding lightweight champion from the 1920s, retired a young (29), wealthy, undefeated champion in 1925. He had it made until Wall Street crashed four years later, and he found himself nearly penniless. Former champions can only do one thing when they're broke, and that's start fighting again. Leonard returned in October '31 and reeled off 18 wins and a draw against opposition that wasn't winning him any respect, but they did get him in position for a big bout against future welterweight champion Jimmy McLarnin.

Leonard probably could have hung around a little while longer against soft touches and then taken his winnings and gone home. He was still among the most popular athletes of the era and was the most beloved Jewish fighter ever. He certainly could have found an easier guy to face than McLarnin, who had established a reputation not only as one of the division's hardest hitters, but as a guy who just couldn't lose to Jewish fighters. But that was one of the reasons Leonard wanted him, and for a couple of rounds the old guy did all right in the Madison Square Garden ring. McLarnin's power and aggression were too much, though, and Leonard, pudgy and slower at 36, couldn't hold him off forever. McLarnin got to him in the sixth with a series of powerpunches, and Leonard crumbled. That was all the convincing this Leonard needed. He never fought again.

Almost 20 years later, an icon even bigger than Leonard suffered the same fate. You couldn't blame Joe Louis for pushing on for as long as he did, and we don't mean for the money he needed to pay off his tax debts. When a fighter is as good at what he does as Louis was, how does he stop? Even after the 25 successful title defenses, after the stint in the Army during World War II, even after the retirement following his knockout win over Jersey Joe Walcott in their rematch, Louis, at 34, was as good as any heavyweight in the world. But when he came back two years later and lost a lopsided decision to Ezzard Charles for the title everyone knew really belonged to the "The Brown Bomber," that

should have been the end. Maybe it would have been if he hadn't still been good enough to reel off eight straight wins, including a decision over Jimmy Bivins. Maybe if he'd lost to Bivins, he wouldn't have gotten crushed in his next bout.

The biggest fight available to Louis was against a young kid named Rocky Marciano, and when the two met in Madison Square Garden in October, Louis came in as the 8-5 favorite. He was bigger than Marciano and more polished to be sure, but he was 37 and the steam in his punches was gone. Marciano wore him down with pressure and strength, and by the eighth, the old man was ready to go. Late in the round, a hook floored him, and moments later, a right put him through the ropes and onto his back. It was brutal, and not only because Louis was a hero to millions. It was the kind of physically brutal knockout that was so convincing that Louis never fought again.

Surely, there must have been those at the time, especially those close to Louis, who knew Marciano's capabilities, who hoped to themselves that the fight wouldn't come off. There were plenty who saw Ali with their heads rather than their hearts and knew he stood no chance against Holmes, and the same goes for Leonard against McLarnin. The time comes when those who were great aren't anymore, but the fighter is the only one who doesn't see it. He needs to be convinced, and convincing him isn't always an easy business. Chavez knows he's not the same guy who ran roughshod over three divisions when he was young. But he doesn't know that it's over yet, either. It's Tszyu's job to convince him that it is, the same way it was Marciano's job to convince Louis, McLarnin's to convince Leonard, and so forth. It's not pretty and it's not nice, but it's the way it works. It's the only way it can work. ■

Anthony Fletcher

(Continued from page 31)

who was becoming a wildly popular middleweight. "The Animal's" brawling style made him one of the premier fighters of the early-'80s, and he would eventually win the USBA middleweight title. (Frank is currently incarcerated in Pennsylvania's Allenworth Federal Prison, serving 22 years after recently violating parole. In a letter to THE RING postmarked March 16, 2000, he wrote: "Primarily, I am doing this sentence not for any serious thing other than my past history with the law ... all of these federal government facilities are nothing but death and slave camps.")

While the brothers were both southpaws, that is where the similarities end. Frank was gutty and powerful. He approached boxing as if on a seek and destroy mission. Anthony was a crafty practitioner of the Sweet Science, preferring the hit-and-make-him-miss approach.

At first, Anthony progressed well as a pro fighter. He decisioned future lightweight champion Livingstone Bramble in '81, but later that year Fletcher contracted Bell's palsy, an affliction that caused him to lose control of his facial muscles—and of his boxing destiny. The disorder virtually paralyzed the left side of his face just as he was on the verge of entering the lightweight division's top 10. There was even talk of a title fight. Suddenly, it appeared that Fletcher might never fight again. He was forced to wear a patch while sleeping because he couldn't close his left eye and he had to wear a ski mask outdoors to avoid cold air in the winter.

Fletcher worked diligently at a comeback. He would chew wads of gum to strengthen the muscles in his jaw and face, and returned to the ring after 11 months of inactivity. He proceeded to reel off an 11-bout unbeaten streak that included a decision over Fred Pendleton, who went on to win a piece of the lightweight crown. In the midst of that streak, though, Fletcher endured another setback. In 1984, he emerged from a 10-round fight against Frank Newton with a disputed draw and a detached retina.

Fletcher was inactive for almost two years before returning to the ring again. In 1987, his record was 21-0-1 before consecutive losses to Tim Burgess and Miguel Santana. Frustrated, Fletcher began to lose interest in boxing. That same year, he was arrested for cocaine possession and was stigmatized forever. With each incident that followed, the ubiquitous term "drug related" found its way into the copy.

There would be one more boxing highlight—a 12-round win over Marvin Garris for the Pennsylvania lightweight title—before the next tragedy.

Just four months after the Garris fight, Fletcher was shot while watching a playground basketball game in southwest Philly. He and friend Eric Hurst were sitting inside of Fletcher's car when two gunmen opened fire. Fletcher was shot in the face, neck, and chest. Hurst was shot five times and died at the scene. Police believed at the time that the shooting was "drug related."

"My friend was already shot in the head," recalled Fletcher. "The gun was pointed right at my head. But because of my boxing reflexes, I was able to grab the gun. It was like I was throwing a counterpunch. It was the same thing that happened with Christopher. I grabbed the gun."

After that shooting, Fletcher was linked to the Junior Black Mafia (JBM), a notorious Philadelphia drug gang. He denies ever having any involvement and produced a copy of a transcript to back up his claim. In the transcript, an informer was asked by Philadelphia detectives to identify individuals associated with the JBM. After identifying several members, the informer was shown a photograph of Fletcher and said, "Anthony Fletcher. He is the guy who got shot at 4th and Washington. He wasn't involved with the JBM."

"No, Anthony doesn't belong to the JBM," added his mother. "I know because they all grew up in our neighborhood."

To live in the inner-city is to be exposed to an element of society that almost certainly will include drug dealers. Fletcher admits as much, but said the dealers knew he was a boxer and respected him for his skills in the ring. Most of the people associated with Fletcher never believed he would get into serious trouble.

"What a beautiful kid he was," said Marty Feldman, who managed Frank and Anthony Fletcher. "He was a pleasure to deal with. He could fight, but he had that bad blinker. They put him in a fight with bullets inside of him. I couldn't put him in like that. They did it for the money, but I don't need that kind of money."

Amazingly, Fletcher did fight after the shooting incident. In February '90, he decisioned Tom Baker in Philadelphia. It would be his final victory in the ring. A knockout loss to Donald Stokes followed, and his final fight came on August 21, 1990, when he was knocked out by Oba Carr.

(Continued on page 62)

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Anthony Fletcher

(Continued from page 61)

In the seven years Anthony has been on death row, his mother, Lucille, has visited him twice. The journey is difficult both logistically and psychologically. The trip to Greene State Correctional Institution in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, is a six-hour drive from Philadelphia. The Quakers run an anti-death penalty program that transports family members of inmates to Waynesburg and finds lodging for them in the homes of local residents. The fee is nominal, but for Lucille the emotional price is too high.

"It's so hard for me knowing he is where he is," she said. "I worry about him all the time. Anthony was a sweetheart of a kid. He never gave anyone any trouble. They shocked me when they came and told me Anthony shot someone. I said, 'No, no, it couldn't have been Anthony.'"

***

Boxing is the most solitary of sports, but even that cannot prepare a man for time spent on death row. As a capital inmate, Fletcher is in his cell 23 hours a day. He can request time in the prison's law library, which he visits several times a week. He receives one hour of recreation each day and takes advantage of that time by doing calisthenics and shadow boxing. The shadow boxing gives him the most pleasure, allowing him to cling to the part of his past of which he is most proud.

Even in the baggy prison uniform, the 44-year-old Fletcher appears close to his fighting weight of 135 pounds. He stands and raises his arms—like a victorious boxer—to show off his trim figure. There is still a hint of the Bell's palsy. His left eye seems to be in a perpetual squint and the left side of his face droops ever so slightly. When he discusses his trial, his emotions run from anger to pain to, finally, desperation. It is during those heart-wrenching moments that Fletcher's voice rises and his eyes water.

"I don't belong here," he shouts. "I'm the nicest guy you could ever meet. I've started my own investigation. I want publicity so they let me go home and see my children."

In the next cubicle, Mumia Abu-Jamal is being visited by anti-death penalty advocates. Abu-Jamal's dreadlocked image is recognizable across the country. Celebrities and private citizens alike have rushed to the aid of Abu-Jamal, who many believe is not guilty of the 1981 slaying of a Philadelphia police officer. Twice, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge has signed his death warrant, and twice Abu-Jamal was granted a stay of execution. His most recent execution date was scheduled for December 2, 1999. A committee has raised $100,000 for Abu-Jamal, which will help in his next round of appeals. In March of 2000, "Hurricane" Carter visited Abu-Jamal and later told reporters he feels Abu-Jamal has been framed.

Fletcher believes that if he had half the friends and half the resources afforded Abu-Jamal, he would be home already. But Fletcher has few allies. He has written to many in the boxing community, including Mike Tyson, Pernell Whitaker, and Sugar Ray Leonard. So far, he has gotten no response. Even his wife has distanced herself from him, and thus he has no communication with his daughters.

Anthony Fletcher Jr., 21, and his mother, Dianne Settles, are his most loyal supporters. Anthony Jr. often helps with legal research and said exonerating his father is his number one-priority. Settles is in charge of his legal defense fund. The father and son write each other frequently, and Anthony Jr. tries to visit once every four months. The last time he saw his father was in October '99.

"I was a kid when this happened and I didn't really understand what was going on," said Anthony Jr. "I was 13 years old when my dad was taken away from me. And my sister, Antoina, she grew up without her father. She is his pride and joy."

The opportunity to see his six children again is a large part of Fletcher's motivation. He jokes that as a result of all his research, he has put himself through law school and medical school. He is relentless in his pursuit of life, of freedom. He has cited several discrepancies—some major, some minor—that he believes contributed to a wrongful conviction:

•Fletcher said the prosecutor told the jury, "Ladies and gentleman, do you know why they call him 'Two-Gun'? Because he always carries two guns." That particularly upset Fletcher because he was proud of his

boxing nickname. "I've been 'Two-Gun' since 1976 when I started boxing. My lawyer didn't object to that."

•The autopsy report indicates no clothing was sent to the medical examiner's office. Clothing would be important for Fletcher to prove that he and Christopher did struggle, because the clothing would have gunpowder or other markings relevant to a gun discharging at close range. Strangely, the hospital report indicates that the clothing *was* sent to the medical examiner.

•The key eyewitness testifying against Fletcher was Renee Grant, who had warrants for retail theft and prostitution against her at the time she testified. At the close of the trial, Grant was given probation for both charges.

There are a host of other issues Fletcher has unearthed while studying his case. None of them impresses Costanzo, who, before the trail, offered Fletcher a deal to plead guilty to third-degree murder and serve 15 to 30 years.

"The jury heard all the evidence," said Costanzo. "What was his intent when he fired two shots at somebody? The jury spoke on that and found it was his intent to kill."

The law in Pennsylvania states a jury can infer the intent to kill if a deadly weapon is used on a vital part of the body. That remains a critical point. Was the wound to a vital part of the body? Fletcher produced a trial transcript in which Costanzo clarifies Christopher's wounds by saying, "For those of you who are not doctors, that's the back inside wall of the abdomen—the right kidney." To a jury, that sounds far more ominous than the right flank.

Any gunshot wound can be lethal, but if Fletcher set out to kill, why did he aim for the right flank? Why wouldn't an ex-soldier, a man trained how to use a gun, aim for the head or the heart?

Later in the trial, the judge asked an expert witness from the medical examiner's office about the immediate physiological cause of death. Dr. Ian Hood's answer was, "The immediate cause would most properly begin as hemorrhagic shock caused by persistent blood loss from the damage done by that gunshot wound to the right flank."

His answer was not simply the gunshot wound. So therefore, can't it be inferred that the gunshot wound, in and of itself, did not cause Christopher's death?

Fletcher wonders why many of these arguments weren't made at his trial. He will argue "ineffective counsel" in his appeal, but despite their current relationship, Patrizio firmly believes his former client deserves a new trial.

"He deserves a new trial on a number of issues," said the attorney. "I've had homicide detectives tell me this was not a first-degree murder. The worst-case scenario is that it was third-degree murder. No way was it first-degree. No way was it first-degree, death penalty. The right thing for the commonwealth to do would be to give him time served and let him go home."

***

The last person executed in the state of Pennsylvania was Gary Heidnik, who was convicted of murdering two women in '88. He was executed by lethal injection on July 6, 1999. The judge presiding over Heidnik's trial was Lynne Abraham, the current District Attorney of Philadelphia. In '95 the *New York Times* magazine published an article on Abraham with a headline reading, "Deadliest D.A." The article detailed how "Abraham's office seeks the death penalty virtually as often as the law will allow." With 130 inmates, Philadelphia represents 55 percent of Pennsylvania's death row population.

Fletcher's appeal for a new trial was argued on December 19, 1998, before the State Supreme Court. In April, the court handed down its decision.

"I got word from the Supreme Court," Fletcher said in a letter to THE RING dated April 2, 2000, "that my appeals for a new trial were denied, so I don't know when the governor will sign my death warrant for execution."

Fletcher can appeal at the federal level, but as of March 2000, he dismissed his appellate lawyer and is seeking a new attorney.

"If I have the right attorney, I go home," Fletcher said. "With the right attorney, I'd never be here. I was framed, man. I never broke the law. It was self-defense."

It's easy to believe Fletcher's passionate argument. Others will find it easier to believe the District Attorney's office. But this fight is bigger than both of them. This fight is about condemning a man to die while very serious doubts remain about the nature of his crime.

"In Philadelphia, they give out death like they are giving out candy," said Settles. "It's such an uphill battle. Anthony's spirits are low at times, but he's not giving up."

Fletcher is in search of an attorney, but more so a champion. Not necessarily one of the WBC, WBA or IBF variety. He needs someone to champion his cause. Someone who can carry his fight outside of the prison walls that contain him. ■

Robert Cassidy is a former associate editor of this magazine.

Micky Ward

(Continued from page 34)

Neary's subsequent bombardment. The home fighter put a lot of wasted effort into finishing him, and the fact that it may have been a lost opportunity was surely not lost on him.

"I could see his punches coming," Ward said later. "He was strong and tough, but I knew if I just stood there with him and banged him downstairs, I'd be all set."

Ward's sustained banging took an inevitable toll. Weary from the sickening bodyblows, Neary left his jaw exposed to those jarring uppercuts. Only his courage prevented his fall. But the fall had to come. A left hook to the body and left uppercut to the jaw dropped Neary on the seat of his pants for the first time in his career in the decisive eighth round. Ward remained relentless when Neary struggled to his feet, the look of a beaten fighter written on his face. Another barrage of uppercuts and hooks sent Neary crashing to the canvas again, and referee Mickey Vann rightly intervened before even taking up a count.

"I've had the keys to my home city presented to me since my return, and the reaction here in Lowell has been great," said Ward, back on the asphalt-laying steamroller despite the biggest triumph of his career. "It feels great, and I want now to make the most of it, make money and maybe get in there with the top guys."

Most fulfilling of all perhaps is that Dick Ecklund now has a meaningful diversion from the temptations that brought him to the brink of the abyss. Kid brother turned out real good and looks certain to need his trusted trainer for another while yet. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S European correspondent and was ringside for the Ward-Neary fight.

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June 1982: Wilfred Benitez Eyes His Fourth World Title: Can He Beat Marvin Hagler? Also: Weaver, Buchanan, Michael Spinks, Sugar Ray, Young.

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Feb. 1983: Howard Davis Jr.: "Why I'll Win The Lightweight Title This Time!" Also: Tubbs, Snipes, Fletcher, boxing on TV, Saad Muhammad.

April 1983: "The Pain From The Tragedy Has Passed," By Ray Mancini. Also: Broad, Hearns-Benitez, 1982 in review.

BIG BOOK OF BOXING

July 1978: Heavyweight Champion Leon Spinks: How Long Will His Reign Last? Also: Armstrong, Ali, Spinks-Norton, Frazier, Young, Shavers.

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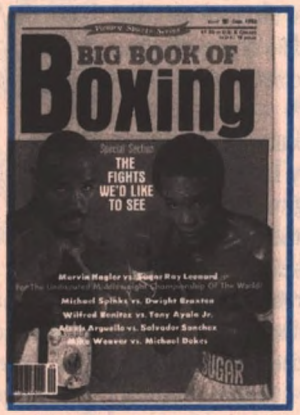

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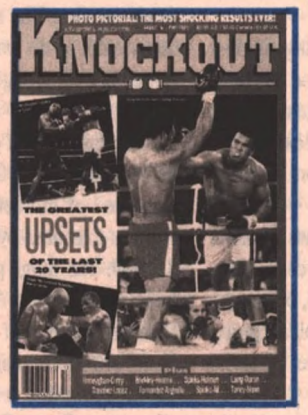

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July 1985: Championship Corner: Donald Curry vs. Colin Jones. Also: Napoles-Griffith, Ali, Charles, 10 meanest fighters, Spinks-Galindez dream fight.

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1983 Edition: Superfight '83—Marvin Hagler vs. Roberto Duran. Previews & Analysis, full records and bios, who will win and why.

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Spring 1988: A Legend In The Making: Mike Tyson—A Collection Of His Greatest Hits. Includes: Eight Tyson features, 10 fights you'd like to see, heavyweight scrapbook part I.

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Spring 1990: The Way Roberto Duran Should Be Remembered. Includes: Duran vs. Buchanan, DeJesus, Palomino, Leonard, and Moore.

Spring 1991: Evander Holyfield—The Stories Of His Success. Includes: Eight Holyfield features, Ali vs. Jack Johnson, Tony Ayala.

Fall 1991: The Greatest Upsets Of The Last 25 Years! Includes: Tyson-Douglas, Ali-Foreman, Leonard-Hagler, Spinks-Ali, Toney-Nunn, Barkley-Hearns.

Spring 1992: The Greatest Punchers Of Our Time! Includes: Tyson, Arguello, Shavers, Foreman, Julian Jackson.

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BOXING COLLECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

By Don Scott

THE RING is not the only boxing magazine sought after by collectors. The West Coast publications *Referee*, *Announcer*, *Redhead*, and *Knockout* are collectibles, especially because they sometimes also served as the only program one could find for West Coast fights. But program collectors want to know whether or not these were "official" programs.

First, some background: The magazines in question are usually composed of articles, ads, and regular columns, and have nice pictorial covers. *Referee* lists its starting year as 1904, though the first issue actually appeared, as we will see, in late-1903. It was a weekly throughout most of its existence. *Announcer*, *Redhead*, and *Knockout* appeared at various times, and were then consolidated under one publisher the way THE RING and *KO* are today. As far as I can tell, all four of the magazines disappeared in the '60s.

From the 1940s until the '60s, fans recall buying *Referee* outside of fight venues in California. The Olympic and the Hollywood Legion Stadium sold their own programs inside, even though *Referee*/*Knockout* was available outside. This is important because some collectors make a distinction between programs sold inside and those sold outside. It's an "official" program vs. "unofficial" program debate. But what about the cases when the magazines were the *only* program available? Does that make them "official"?

The first issue of *Referee* (Volume 1, Number 1) featured the 1903 Bob Fitzsimmons-George Gardner fight in San Francisco and is the only program known to exist (so far) for that match.

Several editions of these publications are entitled "Souvenir Editions" or "Souvenir Programs." One of these is the very rare and much disputed Jack Johnson-Jim Jeffries "Official Souvenir Issue" of *Referee*. There are alterations and added pages to this publication to accommodate the change of venue from San Francisco to Reno, Nevada. But was it the only program? The entire magazine is about the upcoming fight, and to date, no other program has been unearthed. Inside the "program," editor Harry Lefkovitz proclaims that it is *Referee's* "eighth annual souvenir edition," giving credence to the above mentioned claim that *Referee* really began publication in '03, not '04.

Referee produced some less controversial programs. The Rocky Marciano-Don Cockell fight had a *Referee* souvenir edition, which had no volume or number, and has been accepted as the official program, as there was a regular issue of *Referee* for the same week as the souvenir edition. The Dick Tiger-Gene Fullmer "Official Souvenir Program" was published by *Referee*, but there's no mention of the magazine on the cover. There are other examples too numerous to list in the space available.

So what do I recommend to program collectors? First, if you are collecting the above-mentioned magazines as programs, do not do so for fights not held on the West Coast. Second, look for souvenir editions and souvenir programs, as these would be the most valuable of the group, especially if they have no volume or issue number. Next, try to find issues with changes affixed such as pasted-in or stapled cards or paper, as it's unlikely regular subscribers got those. Finally, do not pass up any issues of *Referee*, *Announcer*, *Redhead*, or *Knockout* that feature just one West Coast bout (excluding fights at the Olympic and Hollywood Legion Stadium) because they may very well be the only program from the fights. On the other hand, don't be surprised if an official program shows up at a later date.

As there are so many unanswered questions about these magazine-cum-programs, you probably won't have to pay as much as you would for programs specifically made for a fight. Still, *Referee* and its sister magazines are great old publications and can be found at prices ranging from $5 to $20. Of course, the Johnson-Jeffries issue from 1910 could run you as much as $1,000 or more. ■

Don Scott is the editor and publisher of Boxing Collectors' News and can be reached at BCN, 3316 Luallen Dr., Carrollton, TX 75007 or at his Web site: www.boxingcollectors.com

WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were complied as of March 2000, the WBC as of March 2000, and the IBF as of March 2000.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	C	C	C
John Ruiz (USA)	1	1	5
Michael Grant (USA)	2	5	2
Evander Holyfield (USA)	3	2	3
Mike Tyson (USA)	4	4	–
Wladimir Klitchko (UKR)	5	3	12
David Tua (NZ)	6	6	1
Larry Donald (USA)	7	8	4
Henry Akinwande (GB)	8	9	9
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	9	–	–
Andrew Golota (POL)	10	–	–
Oleg Maskaev (UKR)	13	7	10
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	10	8
Danell Nicholson (USA)	–	–	6
Chris Byrd (USA)	17	–	7

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	–	–
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	–	C	–
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	–	–	C
James Toney (USA)	1	4	5
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	2	–	6
Alex Gonzalez (PR)	3	8	–
Torsten May (GER)	4	10	2
Joe Siluvangi (FRA)	5	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	6	1	7
Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)	7	–	12
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	8	5	9
Lou Del Valle (USA)	9	–	–
Louis Azille (DR)	10	–	–
Valery Vikhor (LAT)	–	2	–
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	–	3	–
Akim Tafer (FRA)	–	6	–
Saul Montana (MEX)	–	7	8
Andre Purlette (GUY)	–	9	4
Alex Gonzales (USA)	–	–	1
Arthur Williams (USA)	17	11	3
Carl Thompson (GB)	15	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	C	C
Michael Nunn (USA)	1	9	–
Clinton Woods (GB)	2	12	7
Eric Harding (USA)	3	5	2
Reggie Johnson (USA)	4	–	6
Yawe Davis (ITA)	5	–	–
Antonio Tarver (USA)	6	–	1
David Telesco (USA)	7	6	9
Greg Wright (USA)	8	–	–
Thomas Ulrich (GER)	9	–	–
Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)	10	7	3
Richard Hall (USA)	–	1	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	2	12
Frank Liles (USA)	–	3	–
Derrick Harmon (USA)	11	4	–
Timo Masua (NZ)	–	8	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	15	10	–
Billy Lewis (USA)	29	11	4
Thomas Tate (USA)	–	–	5
Jimmy Crawford (USA)	–	–	8
Lincoln Carter (USA)	16	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Markus Beyer (GER)	C	–	–
Byron Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Sven Ottke (GER)	–	–	C
Glenn Catley (GB)	1	7	–
David Starie (GB)	2	10	–
Eric Lucas (CAN)	3	–	–
Richie Woodhall (GB)	4	–	–
Mario Velt (GER)	5	3	8
Omar Sheika (USA)	6	–	7
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	7	–	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	8	6	1
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	9	2	–
Stephane Ouellet (CAN)	10	–	–
Bruno Girard (FRA)	–	1	5
Manuel Siacca (PR)	–	4	–
Mike Makata (NZ)	–	5	–
Fredric Alvarez (SWE)	20	8	9
Mads Larsen (DEN)	11	9	–
James Butler (USA)	27	–	2
Syd Vanderpool (CAN)	–	–	3
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	–	–	4
Tocker Pudwill (USA)	–	–	6
Guy Waters (AUSTRL)	25	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	C	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	–	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Robert McCracken (GB)	1	11	–
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	2	–	6
Kevin Palmer (USA)	3	–	–
Erland Betare (FRA)	4	–	–
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	5	–	–
Howard Eastman (GB)	6	2	7
Lonnie Bradley (USA)	7	–	–
Johnson Tshuma (ZIM)	8	10	–
Ali Ennebati (FRA)	9	–	8
Davey Hilton (CAN)	10	12	4
Rito Ruvalcaba (MEX)	–	1	9
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	12	3	–
Ramon Moyano (ARG)	18	4	–
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	–	5	5
Winky Wright (USA)	–	6	–
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	–	7	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	8	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	11	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	–	2
Brian Barbosa (USA)	15	–	3
Carl Daniels (USA)	–	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Francisco Castillejo (SPA)	C	–	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	C	–
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	–	C
Tony Marshall (USA)	1	–	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	2	1	–
Roman Karmazin (RUS)	3	5	8
Anthony Jones (USA)	4	10	12
Tony Badea (ROM)	5	–	–
Alfred Ankamah (GHA)	6	–	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	7	6	–
Akira Ohigashi (JAP)	8	12	–
Carl Daniels (USA)	9	7	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	10	–	2
David Reid (USA)	–	2	–
Jose Flores (MEX)	–	3	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	4	6
Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)	25	8	–
Emmett Linton (USA)	–	9	5
Ross Thompson (USA)	26	–	1
Winky Wright (USA)	–	–	3
Bronco McKart (USA)	13	–	4
Pat Coleman (USA)	–	–	7
Marshall Simpson (GUY)	–	–	9
Evans Ashira (DEN)	–	–	10

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Felix Trinidad (PR)	C	–	–
James Page (USA)	–	C	–
Vacant	–	–	C
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	1	–	–
Shane Mosley (USA)	2	2	2
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	3	4	5
Vernon Forrest (USA)	4	5	3
Derrell Coley (USA)	5	–	–
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	6	11	–
Kofi Jantuah (GHA)	7	–	–
Carlos Baldomir (ARG)	8	9	–
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	9	–	–
Thomas Damgaard (DEN)	10	6	–
Andrew Lewis (GUY)	22	1	10
Michael Trabant (GERE)	23	3	–
Oba Carr (USA)	13	7	4
Jeff Malcolm (AUS)	–	8	–
Frank Olsen (DEN)	18	10	6
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	1
Andrew Murray (USA)	–	–	7
Sam Garr (USA)	15	–	8
Scott Dixon (GB)	–	–	9

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	C	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Zab Judah (USA)	–	–	C
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	1	–	–
Oktay Urkal (TUR)	2	4	6
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	3	3	–
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	4	2	–

Mickey Ward (USA)	5	–	–
Arturo Gatti (CAN)	6	–	–
Gianluca Branco (ITA)	7	–	–
Vince Phillips (USA)	8	–	–
Ahmed Santos (USA)	9	–	–
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)	10	–	–
Hector Camacho Jr (PR)	–	1	5
Junichi Ono (JAP)	–	5	–
Fred Pendleton (USA)	–	6	–
Demetrio Ceballos (PAN)	–	7	–
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	8	–
Elio Ortiz (VEN)	–	9	–
Giuseppi Laury (ITA)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Allan Vester (DEN)	22	–	3
Cesar Leiva (ARG)	–	–	4
Jason Rowland (GB)	–	–	7
Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)	19	11	8
Jan Bergman (SA)	–	–	9
Teddy Reid (USA)	14	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Steve Johnston (USA)	C	–	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	C	–
Paul Spadafora (USA)	–	–	C
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	1	–	–
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	2	–	4
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	3	–	6
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	4	4	–
Hector Camacho Jr (USA)	5	–	–
Billy Schwer (GB)	6	–	–
Daomai Sithkodam (THAI)	7	–	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	8	2	5
Ivan Robinson (USA)	9	–	3
James Leija (USA)	10	–	8
Vacant	–	1	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	11	3	–
Oscar Garcia Cano (SPA)	15	5	–
Stefano Zoff (ITA)	–	6	–
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	14	7	–
Miguel Calist (PAN)	–	8	–
Raul Balbi (ARG)	–	9	–
Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)	–	10	–
Billy Irwin (CAN)	21	–	1
Joel Perez (USA)	–	–	2
Wilfrido Ruiz (USA)	–	–	7
Angel Manfredy (USA)	–	–	9
Mike Griffith (USA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	C	–	–
Jongkwon Rock (KOR)	–	C	–
Diego Corrales (USA)	–	–	C
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	1	–	–
Jesus Chavez (USA)	2	–	5
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	3	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	4	–	–
Boris Sinitsin (RUS)	5	8	–
Tiger Ari (PHIL)	6	–	–
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)	7	–	–
Robert Garcia (USA)	8	12	9
Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)	9	–	–
Julio Alvarez (MEX)	10	–	–
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	–	1	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	2	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	3	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	4	–
Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)	30	5	–
Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)	22	6	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	–	7	–
Luis Navarro (USA)	–	9	10
Kyuchul Choi (KOR)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	25	–	3
Derrick Gainer (USA)	–	11	4
Carlos Hernandez (USA)	–	–	6
Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)	–	–	7
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	–	–	8

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	C	–	1
Fred Norwood (USA)	–	C	–
Paul Ingle (GB)	–	–	C
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	1	8	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	2	–	–
Injin Chi (KOR)	3	–	–
Cesar Soto (MEX)	4	–	–
Tony Wehbee (AUS)	5	–	10
Edgar Barcenas (MEX)	6	–	–
Istvan Kovacs (HUN)	7	6	–
Takeo Imaoka (JAP)	8	–	–
Augie Sanchez (USA)	9	–	7
Steve Robinson (GB)	10	–	–
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	–	1	3
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	2	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	3	8
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	4	11
Philip Ndou (SA)	–	5	–
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	14	7	–
Richard Carrillo (VEN)	–	9	–
Frederic Perez (FRA)	20	10	–
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	2
Manuel Medina (MEX)	18	–	4
Frankie Toledo (USA)	–	–	5
Oscar Larios (MEX)	–	–	6
Junior Jones (USA)	–	–	9

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	C	–	–
Clarence Adams (USA)	–	C	–
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	–	–	C
Michael Brodie (GB)	1	7	2
Willie Jorrin (USA)	2	–	3
Sergei Devakov (UKR)	3	–	–
Oscar Larios (MEX)	4	–	–
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	5	–	–
Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)	6	–	12
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	7	–	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	8	10	5
Israel Vazquez (MEX)	9	–	8
Shin Yamato (JAP)	10	–	–
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	1	–
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	22	2	–
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	3	–
Nestor Garza (MEX)	–	4	–
Vladislav Antonov (RUS)	–	5	6
Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)	–	6	–
Jose Rojas (VEN)	–	8	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	–	9	11
Ernesto Gray (COL)	–	–	1
Jesus Salud (USA)	–	–	4
Agapito Sanchez (DR)	18	–	7
Hector Julia Avila (DR)	12	–	9
John Johnson (USA)	15	11	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	C	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	–	C	–
Tim Austin (USA)	–	–	C
Adan Vargas (MEX)	1	7	–
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	2	–	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	3	4	8
Jess Maca (PHIL)	4	–	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	5	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	6	–	5
Ricardo Barajas (MEX)	7	–	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	8	–	–
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	9	–	–
Francisco Mateos (MEX)	10	–	–
Vacant	–	1	–
Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI)	–	2	–
Danny Romero (USA)	–	3	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	–	5	–
Fernando Montiel (MEX)	–	6	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	–	8	–
Rafael Marquez (MEX)	13	9	12
Wate Singwancha (THAI)	–	10	–
Jesus Perez (COL)	21	–	1
Arthur Johnson (USA)	12	–	2
Jose Mendoza (COL)	–	–	3
Pete Frissina (USA)	23	11	4
Noel Wilders (GB)	22	–	6
Paul Lloyd (GB)	–	–	7
Mauricio Martinez (PAN)	–	–	9
Steve Dotse (GHA)	26	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
In Joo Cho (KOR)	C	–	–
Hideki Todaka (JAP)	–	C	–
Vacant	–	–	C
Eric Morel (USA)	1	–	–
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	2	–	8
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	3	9	10
Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)	4	–	6
Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)	5	–	–
Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)	6	–	–
Seungrok Choi (KOR)	7	–	–
Trinidad Mendoza (MEX)	8	–	–
Fernando Montiel (MEX)	9	–	–
Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)	10	–	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	1	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	4
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	–	3	5
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	–	4	–
Edison Torres (VEN)	–	5	–
Felix Machado (VEN)	–	6	2
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	7	–
Akihigo Nago (JAP)	–	8	–
Lester Fuentes (NIC)	22	10	–
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	–	–	1
Luis Bolanos (COL)	–	12	3
Raul Juarez (MEX)	–	–	7
Francisco Tejedor (COL)	–	–	9

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)	C	–	–
Sornpichai Kratchingdaeng (THAI)	–	C	–
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	C
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	1	–	–
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	2	–	7
David Guerault (FRA)	3	5	1
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	4	–	–
Mike Trejo (USA)	5	11	4
Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)	6	–	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	7	10	3
Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)	8	–	–
Damaen Kelly (GB)	9	–	–
Oscar Arciniega (MEX)	10	–	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	1	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	2	11
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	3	–
Panieng Okuda (THAI)	–	4	–
Eric Morel (USA)	–	6	–
Hugo Soto (ARG)	–	7	12
Jose Lopez (VEN)	–	8	–
Gilberto Keb Baas (MEX)	11	9	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Zoltan Lunka (TUR)	21	–	5
Pedro Pena (USA)	–	–	6
Jose Landin (USA)	–	–	8
Angel Priolo (COL)	–	–	9
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Yosam Choi (KOR)	C	–	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	C	–
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	–	–	C
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	1	3	5
Jorge Arce (MEX)	2	7	9
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	3	9	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	4	2	–
Panieng Sasiprabha (THAI)	5	–	–
Bebis Mendoza (COL)	6	–	–
Jose Luis Zepeda (MEX)	7	–	–
Eric Ortiz (MEX)	8	–	–
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)	9	–	–
Nelson Dieppa (DR)	10	8	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	–	1	–
Pongsaklek Nakornton (THAI)	–	4	–
Yura Dimas (MON)	–	5	–
Jose Sanjuanelo (COL)	–	6	–
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin (THAI)	–	10	4
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	11	3
Pongsaklek Sithkanongsak (THAI)	–	–	6
Alex Sanchez (PR)	–	–	7
Domingo Guillen (DR)	–	–	8
Mickey Cantwell (GB)	–	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	C	–	–
Noel Arumbulet (VEN)	–	C	–
Zolani Petelo (SA)	–	–	C
Daniel Reyes (COL)	1	4	1
Erdene Chuluun (MON)	2	–	–
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	3	–	–
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	4	–	10
Udomdet Porpaoin (THAI)	5	7	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	6	–	6
Fernando Luna (MEX)	7	–	–
Jaewon Kim (KOR)	8	–	–
Makoto Suzuki (JAP)	9	12	–
Manny Melchor (PHIL)	10	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	–	1	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	2	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	3	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	5	–
Atsushi Sai (JAP)	–	6	–
Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)	16	8	–
Satoru Abe (JAP)	17	9	–
Fasan Pongsawan (THAI)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Mickey Cantwell (GB)	–	–	3
Rocky Palma (JAP)	–	–	4
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	–	–	5
Rocky Lim (TWN)	–	–	7
Alberto Rossel (PERU)	–	–	8
Juan Herrera (COL)	–	–	9

CLASSIC

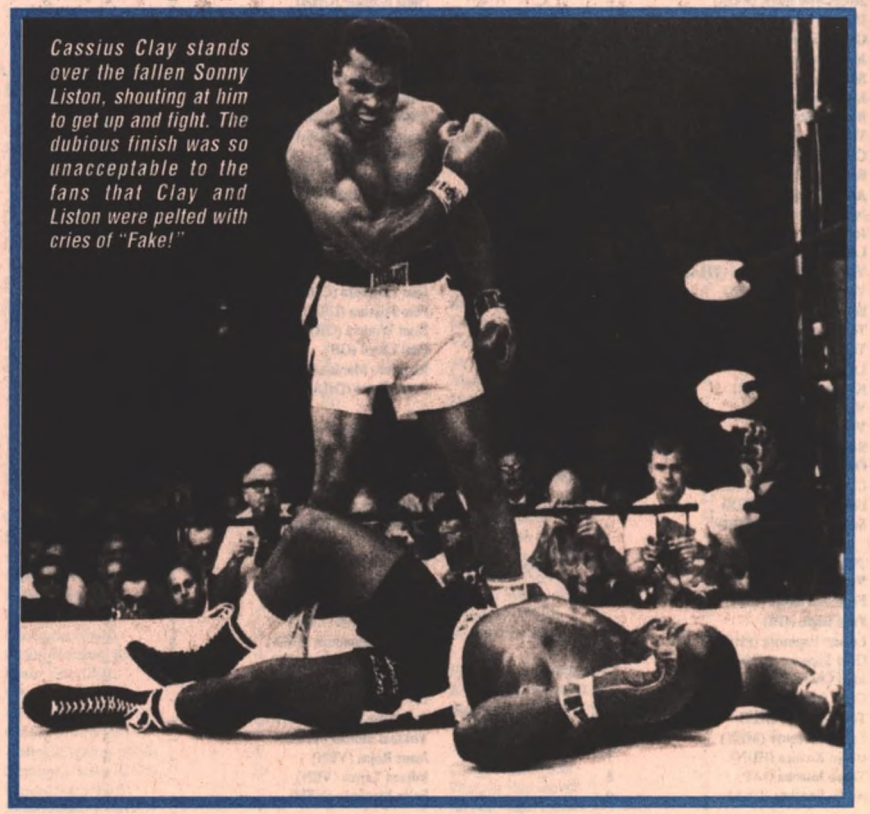
WHAT I SAW, WHAT I DID, AT LEWISTON

By Nat Fleischer

"The Battle Of Confusion" took place in St. Dom's Youth Center in Lewiston, Maine, which, like the shot at Lexington that was heard around the world, created an international uproar.

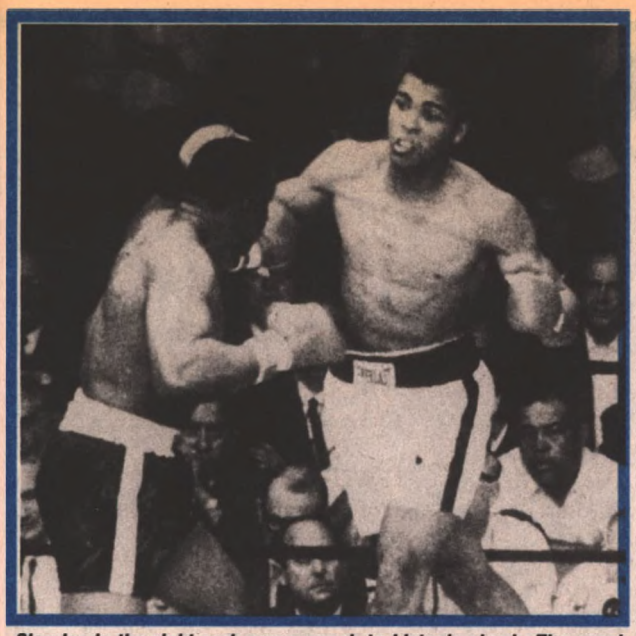
Cassius Clay, holder of the world championship, retained his crown by knocking out Sonny Liston, former title-holder, in one minute of the first round. This to the utter amazement of those around the ringside and the millions who saw the fight on closed-circuit TV in our country, and via the Early Bird satellite in other parts of the world.

What made this fight so confusing, so unacceptable to the public, and created so bad an impression were the many factors that aroused the fans to ire. Cries of "Fake, fake, fake" from onlookers, and charges of collusion created a situation that once again has brought the introduction of bills to create a National Commissioner of Boxing.



Cassius Clay stands over the fallen Sonny Liston, shouting at him to get up and fight. The dubious finish was so unacceptable to the fans that Clay and Liston were pelted with cries of "Fake!"

From THE RING, August 1965



Clay lands the right cork-screw punch to Liston's cheek. The punch, maintains THE RING editor Nat Fleischer, did indeed strike Liston. But, Fleischer says, only Liston knows how hard a blow it was.

I sat next to the knockdown timekeeper and had a clear view of the happenings.

Let me here go on record with the statement that there was no "invisible" punch. There was a blow that definitely landed, and reporters who say there was no punch are dead wrong.

The slow motion movies shown after the fight clearly prove that a short right hand blow, a sort of cork-screw punch, landed on the left part of Liston's cheek. That is the punch that so many persons called a "phantom punch," though it clearly struck home. How hard a blow? Only Liston knows.

Accustomed to seeing major contests over the past 60 years, I must state that I was as much surprised as were the spectators to think that the oak-hewed giant challenger could be toppled with a thud from what might well be described as a one-punch knockout. He dropped from an apparently far from devastating punch, one seemingly not sufficiently powerful to put to the canvas a 215¼-pound hulk.

Liston, as he declared after the fight, had been hit by far more powerful wallops by Cleveland Williams, had taken more punishment without batting an eye and had stood upright through many tougher exchanges with spar mates, buckled under the impact of one righthander that did not even land flush on the jaw, but hit him sideways. It will be recalled that when Liston fought Marty Marshall, Liston's jaw was broken. Yet he fought on to the last round.

That is the situation that quickly developed the chaos, the charges, the wild scenes that made of this affair an international rhubarb. The once postponed, rescheduled fight that had been chased by the Attorney General out of Massachusetts to Lewiston, Maine, and was accepted there with the blessings of the governor of that state, was bungled from start to finish.

Officials who were lax in the rules of boxing, a referee who by his own admission lost control of the fight and brought about the final act in the state of confusion, the failure of the commission, untrained in the handling of a world championship bout, to have a microphone at the ringside, especially in a heavyweight title match, were responsible factors.

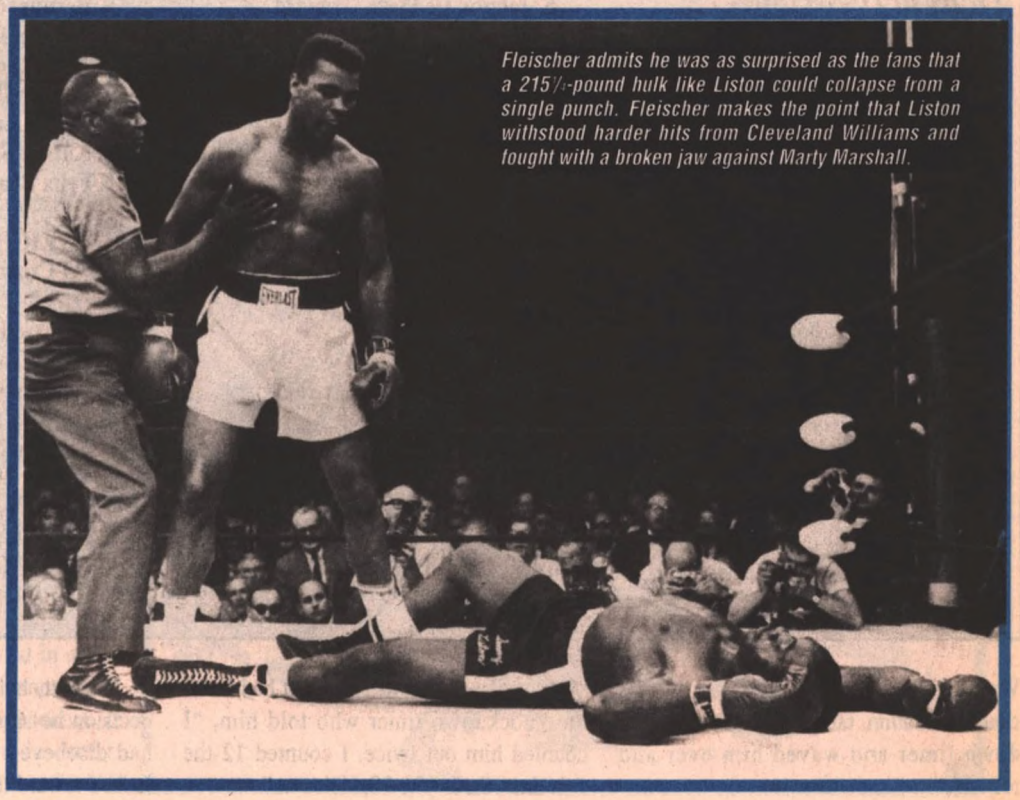
Had a microphone been available for knockdown timer Frank McDonough, a retired Portland, Maine, printer, so that referee Jersey Joe Walcott could have been appraised of the count as he struggled with Clay to go to a neutral corner, the subsequent happenings would not have taken place.

As things turned out, all McDonough had was a gavel, and while he did, contrary to statements of many of the reporters, bang away while counting, the din around the ringside, the loud cries of "Fake" that rent the air, prevented anyone except those close to him from hearing the bangs on the table.

He first counted 10 and shouted "Out," then continued to let his watch run two more seconds, then didn't stop until it reached the 20 mark, when he halted.

I watched him. I saw what had happened, and knew that Liston actually had been down for 20 seconds.

Just before Liston got to his feet,



Fleischer admits he was as surprised as the fans that a 215¼-pound hulk like Liston could collapse from a single punch. Fleischer makes the point that Liston withstood harder hits from Cleveland Williams and fought with a broken jaw against Marty Marshall.

THE RING RATINGS, August 1965

Joey Giardello

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Cassius Clay, Louisville, KY
1. **Floyd Patterson,** Great Neck, NY
2. **Ernest Terrell,** Philadelphia, PA
3. **George Chuvalo,** Canada
4. **Sonny Liston,** Denver, CO
5. **Zora Folley,** Chandler, AZ
6. **Karl Mildenberger,** Germany
7. **Thad Spencer,** Portland, OR
8. **Eddie Machen,** Berkeley, CA
9. **Roger Rischer,** San Francisco, CA
10. **Hubert Hilton,** New York, NY

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jose Torres, Puerto Rico
1. **Gregario Peralta,** Argentina
2. **Willie Pastrano,** Miami Beach, FL
3. **Mauro Mina,** Peru
4. **Harold Johnson,** Philadelphia, PA
5. **Wayne Thornton,** Fresno, CA
6. **Eddie Cotton,** Seattle, WA
7. **Bob Foster,** Washington, D.C.
8. **Roger Rouse,** San Jose, CA
9. **Gert (Hotty) Van Heerden,** S. Africa
10. **Henry Hank,** San Francisco, CA

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joey Giardello, Cherry Hill, NJ
1. **Dick Tiger,** Nigeria
2. **Joey Archer,** New York, NY
3. **Rubin Carter,** Passaic, NJ
4. **Nino Benvenuti,** Italy
5. **Sandro Mazzinghi,** Italy
6. **Laszlo Papp,** Hungary
7. **Luis Folledo,** Spain
8. **Gomeo Brennan,** Bahamas
9. **Harry Scott,** England
10. **Stan Harrington,** Honolulu, HI

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Emile Griffith, Weehawken, NJ
1. **Luis Rodriguez,** Miami, FL
2. **Manuel Gonzalez,** Odessa, TX
3. **Willie Ludick,** South Africa
4. **Brian Curvis,** Wales
5. **Jose Stable,** New York, NY
6. **Curtis Cokes,** Dallas, TX
7. **Gabriel Terronez,** Fresno, CA
8. **Billy Collins,** Nashville, TN
9. **Fortunata Manca,** Italy
10. **Ted Whitfield,** Amherst, MA

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos Hernandez, Venezuela
1. **Eddie Perkins,** Chicago, IL
2. **Jose Napoles,** Mexico
3. **Sandro Lopopolo,** Italy
4. **Tito Marshall,** Panama
5. **Adolph Pruitt,** St. Louis, MO
6. **Pierro Brandi,** Italy
7. **Louis Molina,** San Jose, CA
8. **Johnny De Pieza,** Trinidad
9. **Olli Maki,** Finland
10. **Paul Fujii,** Honolulu, HI

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ismael Laguna, Panama
1. **Carlos Ortiz,** New York, NY
2. **Nicolino Locche,** Argentina
3. **Bunny Grant,** Jamaica
4. **Paul Armstead,** Los Angeles, CA
5. **Angel Robinson,** France
6. **Kenny Lane,** Muskegon, MI
7. **Alfredo Urbina,** Mexico
8. **Franco Brondi,** Italy
9. **Frankie Narvaez,** New York, NY
10. **Conny Rudhof,** Germany

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Gabriel (Flash) Elorde, Philippines
1. **Johnny Bizzarro,** Erie, PA
2. **Love Allotey,** Ghana
3. **Teruo Kosaka,** Japan
4. **Kang Suk Il,** Korea
5. **Vicente Derado,** Argentina
6. **Jose Luis Cruz,** Mexico
7. **Ray Adigun,** Nigeria
8. **Danny Valdez,** Los Angeles, CA
9. **Kid Tano,** Spain
10. **Enoch Nhlapo,** South Africa

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vicente Saldivar, Mexico
1. **Misunori Seki,** Japan
2. **Howard Winstone,** Wales
3. **Carlos Canete,** Argentina
4. **Raul Rojas,** San Pedro, CA
5. **Floyd Robertson,** Ghana
6. **Jaime Valladares,** Ecuador
7. **Yves Desmarets,** France
8. **Antonio Herrera,** Colombia
9. **Joe Rafiu King,** Nigeria
10. **Don Johnson,** Los Angeles, CA

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Fighting Harada, Japan
1. **Eder Jofre,** Brazil
2. **Jesus Pimental,** Los Angeles, CA
3. **Joe Medel,** Mexico
4. **Bernardo Caraballo,** Colombia
5. **Manuel Barrios,** Mexico
6. **Alan Rudkin,** England
7. **Mimun Ben Ali,** Spain
8. **Risto Luukkonen,** Finland
9. **Katsuo Saito,** Japan
10. **Felix Brami,** Tunisia

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Salvatore Burruni, Italy
1. **Hiroyuki Ebihara,** Japan
2. **Pone Kingpetch,** Thailand
3. **Alacran (Efran) Torres,** Mexico
4. **Horacio Accavallo,** Argentina
5. **Takeshi Nakamura,** Japan
6. **Walter McGowan,** Scotland
7. **Katsuyoshi Takayama,** Japan
8. **Rocky Gattellari,** Australia
9. **Raton Mojica,** Nicaragua
10. **Bob Allotey,** Ghana

Walcott, for the first time during this chaotic situation, turned toward the knockdown timer and waved him over and requested me to do likewise.

It was only then that Walcott had faced the knockdown timer who told him, "I counted him out twice. I counted 12 the first time, then up to 20. He's out."

Walcott, befuddled, unable to make a decision he should have made since Clay had disobeyed the "neutral corner" rule, rushed toward the center of the ring where

The Clay-Liston rematch was beset with problems from the outset. Here, Harold Conrad of Intercontinental Promotion tries desperately to find a new site, after the promotion was chased from the original Boston Garden venue due to legal entanglements.

Clay and Liston had resumed the fight while Walcott was conferring with the official. Walcott raised the hand of Clay and declared that Cassius had won by a knockout.

Asked whether he had stopped the fight, he replied, "No, the timer counted him out."

Thus for the first time in the history of championship boxing, the timer, not the referee, who had sole charge of the ring, declared a fighter the winner by a knockout, although that sole prerogative belongs to the referee. Several reporters declared that I, not an official, had stopped the fight.

Nothing like that took place. I merely aided in bringing Walcott over to the official knockdown timer at his request, since he couldn't get Jersey Joe's attention. The 67-year-old official was hemmed in at the ringside and couldn't get up to announce to Joe that Liston had lost by a knockout. It was a bungled promotion from the outset. The only capable man in the outfit was Harold Conrad, but he had no say in the choice of officials or arrangements the Maine Commission had to make. That was its job, and its members, inexperienced in the handling of such a gigantic task, especially with only one week's time following the transfer from Boston, lost control.

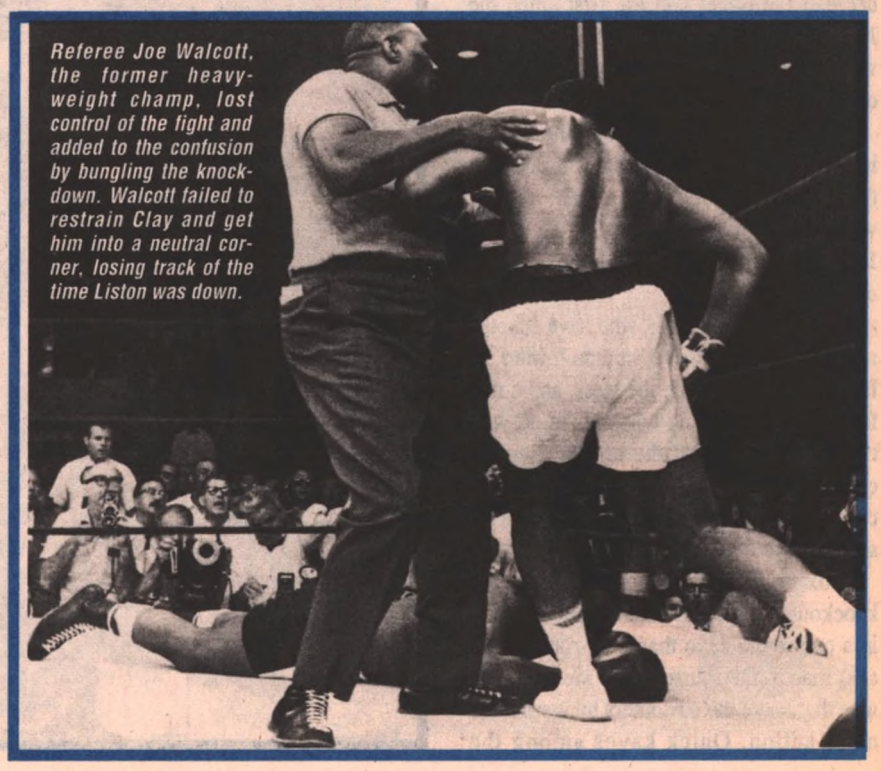
The fight fans couldn't believe that a fighter, never before downed, could be placed in such a supine condition, as was Liston from one side shot to the cheekbone. It certainly was not a devastating blow or a thunderous one that could be heard around the ringside, and the jeers that followed clearly testified to the attitude of those who felt they had been bilked.

Liston sank to the canvas on one knee, rolled on his back, returned to the one-knee position, then fell over and lay on the canvas as if hit with a rifle shot.

The taunts of the fans followed, and reports from all theaters where the fight was shown told of wild, in some cases, tumultuous, scenes as irate spectators demanded the return of their money.

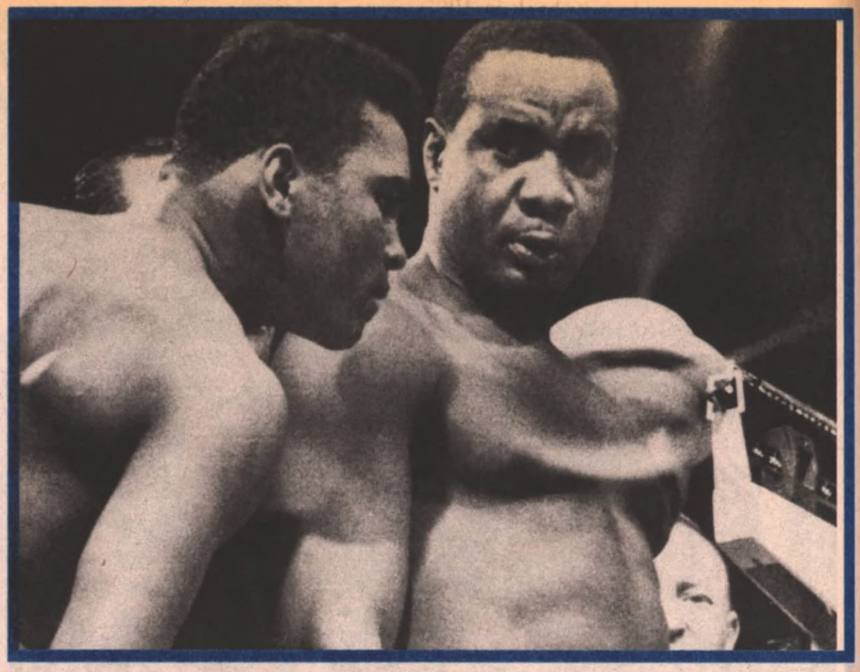
Jack London, in his report of the match in Sydney, Australia, between Jack Johnson and Tommy Burns in 1908, sent back word to the *New York Herald*: "The fight? There was no fight." We can also say this of the latest blow to the sport.

It was an affair, however, that set many

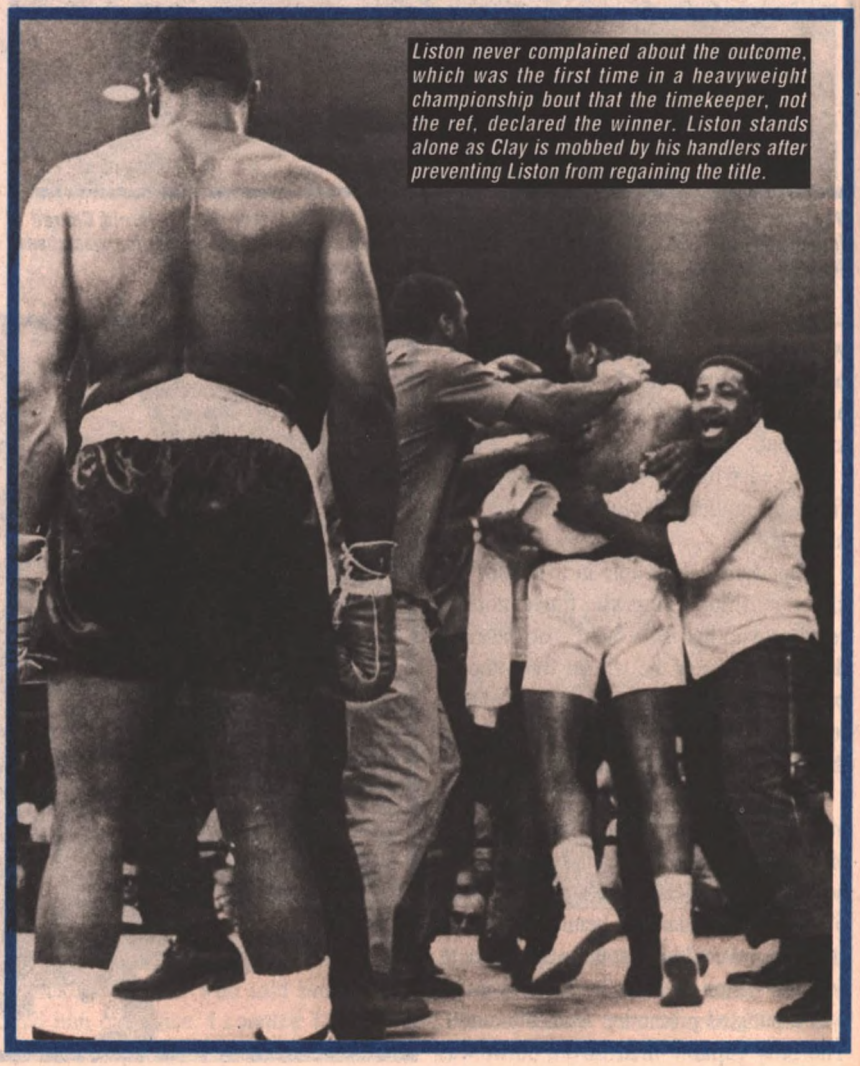


Referee Joe Walcott, the former heavyweight champ, lost control of the fight and added to the confusion by bungling the knockdown. Walcott failed to restrain Clay and get him into a neutral corner, losing track of the time Liston was down.

Francis McDonough, a retired printer, was the knockdown timekeeper. McDonough first counted to 10, then yelled, "Out," according to Fleischer. But with no microphone at ringside, no one was able to hear his count. He finally reached a count of 20, then informed Walcott.



Everything went wrong in Lewiston, which was ill-prepared to handle a title fight. The first indication of trouble came during the weigh-in, when Liston tipped the scales at 219½. Liston claimed that was too heavy. The scale was readjusted to reveal Liston's correct weight of 215¼.



Liston never complained about the outcome, which was the first time in a heavyweight championship bout that the timekeeper, not the ref, declared the winner. Liston stands alone as Clay is mobbed by his handlers after preventing Liston from regaining the title.

records: the smallest paid crowd in the history of the division since the modern era got underway; the first heavyweight title fight in which the referee had no vote; the first in which a timekeeper, not the referee, decided the issue; and the first since the Johnson-Jeffries match in which the fight was chased to another state by government officials.

Now, the matter of the time of the imbroglio. The official timer has said that the fight lasted one minute. The people who took the movies for the TV say it was 1:48. I say it was 1:42—1:32 plus 10 seconds, by my watch.

The television people, who have adopted an unusually possessive attitude toward all facts having to do with the mess, and a few factors having nothing whatever to do with it, have insisted that the official time be changed to 1:48. However, the records will continue to say that this fight lasted just 60 seconds.

Boxing history is replete with quick knockouts. Sometimes there is more action in a one-round kayo than a 15-round decision match. Of course, there are fast endings that leave the customers hungering for more action. Quick kayos among the

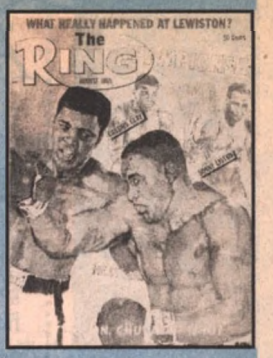
heavyweights started away back in 1907 when champion Tommy Burns starched Bill Squires in 2:09 on July 4 at Colma, California. Burns was involved in another one-round knockout, against Jem Roche the following year. However, the top ranking man in fast finishes is Joe Louis, who stopped five opponents in the opening stanza. Except for Louis' first-round knockout of Germany's Max Schmeling, whom most Americans disliked because he was linked with Adolph Hitler's hated Nazi army, the paying customers went away feeling they were a bit cheated because of the way Joe disposed of his challengers. This is just about the same way the paying customers felt at ringside and in theaters when Clay finished off Liston. All one-round kayos leave something to be desired from a fan's standpoint. ■

Liston flattens Patterson in their first fight

QUICKIES

The quickest heavyweight title fights on record:

1:00—Cassius Clay over Sonny Liston, May 25, 1965, at Lewiston, Maine
1:28—Tommy Burns over Jem Roche, March 17, 1908, at Dublin, Ireland
2:04—Joe Louis over Max Schmeling, June 22, 1938, at New York
2:06—Sonny Liston over Floyd Patterson, September 25, 1962, at Chicago
2:09—Joe Louis over Tami Mauriello, September 18, 1946, at New York
2:09—Tommy Burns over Bill Squires, July 4, 1907, at Colma, California
2:10—Sonny Liston over Floyd Patterson, July 22, 1963, at Las Vegas
2:20—Joe Louis over Jack Roper, April 17, 1939, at Los Angeles
2:25—Rocky Marciano over Jersey Joe Walcott, May 15, 1953, at Chicago
2:29—Joe Louis over John Henry Lewis, January 25, 1939, at New York
2:56—Joe Louis over Buddy Baer, January 9, 1942, at New York



The Cover: THE RING revisited Lewiston, Maine, the scene of what many believe was one of the biggest frauds in boxing history. Did Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) really knock out Sonny Liston in his first defense of the heavyweight title, or was it a dive? THE RING's legendary founder and editor Nat Fleischer saw it all and said Clay did hit Liston, but questioned how hard the punch was.

Small Town Success: The Clay-Liston bout was originally scheduled to take place at the Boston Garden, but was switched to Lewiston, Maine. Throughout the history of boxing, major bouts were moved to smaller cities with successful results. One was the Jack Johnson-Jess Willard title bout *(pictured)*, which was moved from Mexico City to Havana, Cuba.

The Million-Dollar Touch: Jack Kearns, the manager of Jack Dempsey, had a knack for pulling off schemes, and his grandest of all was matching Dempsey and light heavyweight champion Georges Carpentier of France. The fight drew 80,000 fans to Jersey City, New Jersey, for a gate of $1,626,580—of which Kearns pocketed $300,000.

The Uncrowned Champ: Joey Giardello may have been recognized as the middleweight champ of the world, but in the eyes of many, Dick Tiger was the true champ. The Nigerian dominated the formidable Rubin "Hurricane" Carter over 10 rounds at Madison Square Garden, proving he was the best in the division.

Fighter Of The Month: Cassius Clay dropped Sonny Liston for the first time in his career in their rematch. In doing so, Clay recorded the quickest knockout in heavyweight championship history, officially stopping the once-indestructible Liston in just 60 seconds.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

MORALES-BARRERA II LEAVES NAZ BLUE

Erik Morales has stated in no uncertain terms that he wants a rematch with **Marco Antonio Barrera** before the year is out. That's good news for just about everyone. It's good for the fans because the first fight was a classic with an inconclusive ending, the ultimate formula for creating rematch fever. It's good for Morales because the only way to wipe the tarnish from his otherwise sterling career is to beat Barrera without a gift from the judges. It's good for Barrera because it's a megafight against an opponent he has reason to believe he owns. It's good for nearly everybody. There's just one person who put on a puppy-dog face when he heard the news that Morales and Barrera would be going to war again: **Prince Naseem Hamed**.

Photo by Tom Casino/DirecTV

Barrera and Morales: Rematch on the way

Hamed: Low on options

Morales' plan calls for his debut as a featherweight on the undercard of the June 17 **Oscar De La Hoya-Shane Mosley** show, followed by a challenge for the WBC featherweight title sometime in August, and then the Barrera rematch in November or December. Hamed, fresh off his outstanding win over **Vuyani Bungu** in March, also planned to fight in August and then again in November or December. It's just that his August fight was intended to be in the U.S., perhaps alongside Morales' WBC title challenge, setting up a meeting with the unbeaten Mexican later in the year. Now, with Morales setting his sights on Barrera, Hamed will have to wait until next spring to fight either one of them, and doesn't seem likely to have a real marquee fight at all in 2000.

"It was a huge disappointment," said Naz' American publicist, **George Azar**, of Morales' decision to pursue Barrera again. "Morales was really the plan, and then when we lost him, he took Barrera with him. That left us scrambling a little bit, and now the field is wide open.

"Credibility is very important for Naseem right now. HBO wants him to fight a rematch with **Kevin Kelley**, but he's not very credible at this point, so he's not in the mix. The mandatory is going to be either **'Ko-Ko' Kovacs** [an undefeated but unproven Hungarian] or **Juan Carlos Ramirez** [a better tested but still not too threatening Mexican], and they don't interest Naseem much. **Fred Norwood** might be a possibility, but HBO is nervous about him because he hasn't proven to be stable. So basically, we're finding ourselves crossing a lot of names off the list for various reasons. The one name that is still a possibility that might be a very interesting fight is **Johnny Tapia**."

That's not quite Hamed-Morales or Hamed-Barrera, but we'd take it. Especially since we already know we're getting Morales-Barrera II.

OSCAR'S OPTIONS

De La Hoya's promoter, **Bob Arum**, recently outlined "The Golden Boy's" preferences for his next opponent, assuming he gets by **Shane Mosley**. De La Hoya's top choice is a rematch with **Felix Trinidad** at 147 pounds, although Trinidad has indicated he won't be dropping back down to welterweight. If that can't be worked out, the second choice is a rematch with **Ike Quartey**, though Arum, speaking several days before Quartey's fight with **Fernando Vargas**, noted that the African would be out of the picture if he lost to Vargas. And De La Hoya's number-three option is **Arturo Gatti**, who would finally be fighting at the weight nature intended him to compete at if he faced De La Hoya. When asked why Vargas wasn't on the list, Arum responded, "Vargas can't get down to 147."

As for De La Hoya's less immediate future, it looks like he'll be heading to Italy for a fight next spring, possibly against once-beaten veteran **Michele Piccirillo**.

LISTEN UP

Top Rank publicist **Lee Samuels** says to expect a major push in the coming months for undefeated lightweight prospect **Julio Diaz**, the younger brother of junior welter contender **Antonio Diaz**. "We've been watching this kid progress for the last two years," Samuels said, "and he may be better than Antonio. We're going to be putting him on just about every show we can" ... Former heavyweight title challenger **Zeljko Mavrovic**, who hasn't fought since his September '98 decision loss to **Lennox Lewis**, is reportedly recovered from his leg injury and ready to return, though no date had been set as of press time. ■

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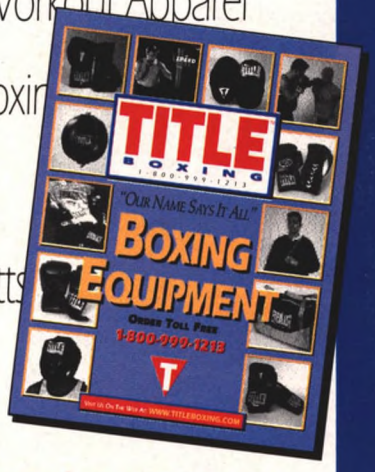

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